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THREE YEARS'

RESIDENCE IN CANADA,

FROM

1837 to 1839.

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WITH NOTES OF A WINTER VOYAGE TO NEW YORK, AND JOURNEY THENCE TO THE BRITISH POSSESSIONS:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A REVIEW OF THE CONDITION

OF THE

CANADIAN PEOPLE.

BY

T. R. PRESTON,

LATE OF THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE AT TORONTO.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1840.

Printed by J. L. Cox and Sons, 75, Great Queen Street,
Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

PREFACE.

The powerful interest respecting the affairs of Canada, that has been lately re-awakened in the mind of the intelligent portion of the community, as much by the revival of animated parliamentary discussions in relation thereto, as by the character of the dispute now pending between England and the United States, has induced me to give publicity to the following pages, as a trifling contribution to the very scanty stock of accessible materials serving to elucidate the general subject-matter of the two-fold case at issue.

Impressed with the conviction, that the results of long personal experience and observation in

the Canadian provinces, must prove a not unwelcome offering to the British public at the present moment, let them originate in what source they may, I have not hesitated to incur the risks and perils of authorship; while, indeed, I cannot but consider, that, in many respects, I have only acquitted myself of a public duty, in placing on record much of that which will be found narrated in these pages.

It should seem obvious that the more varied and multiplied works upon Canada become, the more forcibly and steadily will the public mind continue to be directed to a consideration of the state, with a view to the promotion of the welfare of that country, which presents a vast field for inquiry, even now but partially explored, to all who may be disposed to aid in bringing it under progressive cultivation.

Disastrous as in themselves have proved the events which have marked the history of Canada during the last few years, they have had at least the good effect of diverting public attention

towards a too-long neglected channel; and it is to be hoped, that the feeling now manifested by the British people in relation generally to the subject of Canadian affairs, may prove the more lasting from having been so tardily aroused.

The period which the following reminiscences embrace, extends over the interesting interval from the beginning of 1837 to the end of 1839; and in the course of that interval, I possessed many favourable opportunities of investigating—with what success it remains for others to determine—the various subjects upon which I have ventured to deliver an opinion.

The chief circumstances incident to the proceedings of the Canadian insurgents and their American confederates, I have endeavoured to bring before the reader in a succinct shape. In tracing my impressions of the various objects that I have imperfectly passed in review, I have also sought to pursue a strictly impartial course; to praise or censure according as justice seemed

to dictate; to place in prominent relief the most interesting facts; and, finally, to blend the material substance with such incidental matter, whether as regards personal adventure, descriptive relation, or mere anecdote, as should serve to relieve the more serious portions of the work, at the same time that it should contribute to the amusement of the reader. In the general arrangement of the miscellany thus projected, it has been more my object to connect events and subjects having affinity with each other, than to adhere to a strictly chronological order of narration in respect of them.

Desirous to depend exclusively upon my own means of information, and upon my own experience, I have purposely abstained, since my return to England, from consulting any recent publications whatsoever that have reference to Canada; nor have I sought to ascertain how far my sentiments might chance to correspond with, or differ from, those entertained by other writers who have treated upon the subject.

Unbiassed by party feeling, or by party views, I have been actuated by the desire alone to exhibit to the best of my ability, and according to my conscientious belief, the wants of Canada in their real light, and whilst tracing admitted evils to their primitive sources, to point out what have seemed to me the legitimate remedies for their radical cure; endeavouring, moreover, to bear out by some practical illustration, the respective arguments adduced.

As regards, generally, the political opinions, to which, whether relating to Canada or to the United States, I have given utterance, it is proper to state that, erroneous or correct, they are the result entirely of my past *local* experience; in affirmation of which I may add that they substantially correspond with the sentiments recorded in a series of articles that I contributed, under a feigned signature, to one of the Canadian Journals, about eighteen months ago.

The desire to give early publicity to this work,—while serving to preclude the degree of

revision that I could have wished, as regards its style and composition,—has also compelled me to omit the discussion in it of some further points of interest than those actually brought under consideration; but should circumstances favour the design, I may possibly resume at a future opportunity, the task I have thus far performed.

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THREE YEARS'

RESIDENCE IN CANADA,

(1837—39.)

CHAPTER I.

Memorable Trans-Atlantic voyage.—Incidents and perils thereof.—American Pilot-boat.—American Landlord.

In the winter of 1836, circumstances having required that I should proceed to Canada, I engaged my passage on board a London and New York *liner*, and sailed from Portsmouth towards the end of the uninviting month of November.

Had the occurrences which marked my voyage across the broad bosom of the Atlantic been of the usual ordinary character, I should abstain from even an allusion to them; but, peculiar as

they were, I cannot resist the opportunity of narrating them; and their indelible impression on my memory ensures their being rendered with at least fidelity.

The ship in which I embarked seemed to have been singled out by the elements, from the very hour of her departure, as a special object of assault: peradventure, in derision of the warlike appellation which graced her bows, or because she appeared an antagonist worthy of their strife. If the latter were the cause of joining issue, correct judgment on the part of the elements must certainly be recorded, for never did assailed vessel sustain her ordeal better; though many were the occasions during the progress of the voyage, when even her experienced captain, revealed by his demeanour, to a watchful eye, his secret apprehension that the unequal contest must eventually prove fatal both to her and her living cargo, numbering altogether about one hundred persons, of whom rather less than a fifth part were cabin passengers.

After the prelude of much rough skirmishing, during which Nature failed not to exact her usual

tribute from most on board, the full weight of battle fell suddenly upon us on the 29th of November, when we were caught, while in the Channel, by the frightful hurricane of that night, which, sweeping the Atlantic from west to east, caused, as we subsequently ascertained, the wildest devastation, both on sea and shore, in either hemisphere.

This storm, striking the ship when least expected, all but drove her beneath the water; she recovered, however, from the shock, but still trembling beneath it, could keep no course, and for a considerable time was perfectly unmanageable. No longer could she boast of "walking the waters like a thing of life;" and if it were her demeanour that had "dared the elements to strife," most bitter cause had we to repent her temerity.

The tempest, which raged in its utmost fury throughout the night, somewhat abated towards morning. When daylight dawned, we found ourselves in the dangerous vicinity of the Scilly Rocks, borne on a raging sea, while, staggering towards us, was seen a dismasted vessel. It was

thus evident, that our danger in the darkness had been of a triple character, though we had happily been unconscious of the presence of two of its component elements.

As it was—rolling without a stitch of canvas set, in the deep trough of the sea—we had the utmost difficulty in avoiding the approaching vessel, which, at one time, was separated from us only by a single swell; and had this taken her as all supposed it would do, it must have hurled her right athwart us amidships.

Dismasted and helpless, however, as she was, she managed to pass round our stern, and the anticipated crash, involving the destruction of both ships, was thereby happily avoided.

The sea, at this time, presented a sublime, though an appalling spectacle, and, shrouded in the morning mist which the sun had not yet penetrated, bore the appearance of a wall of dark-iron grey, up the almost perpendicular side of which we were slowly creeping; until having gained the streak of white foam which fringed the summit, the delusion ceased, and we plunged again headlong into a similar abyss to

that from which we had just emerged. But scenes like this defy an adequate description from even the most skilful hand; they must be witnessed, and, once beheld, can never be forgotten.

To add to our misfortunes, during the eventful night through which we had so wonderfully struggled, our captain had been incapacitated from further duty, and now lay prostrate in his berth from the effects of a severe injury of the spine, occasioned by a heavy fall on deck. The ship was, however, skilfully handled by the chief mate, who, though coarse and brutal in his conduct towards the seamen, was a first-rate sailor. On the day previous, the ship's barometer accidentally got broken; and, as sailors are always superstitious, this was looked upon as a bad omen for the voyage.

The horrors of our situation during the hours of darkness, had been necessarily much increased by our ignorance of our precise position; for, although we knew we were in the "whereabout" of the chops of the Channel, when the tempest met us, the compass alone did not enable us to

ascertain the exact point towards which we had since been driven.

The fierce howling of the wind, coming, as it did, not in gusts, but in one dense body, as though compressed into solidity, before it burst upon us; the breaking of the giant waves against the quivering stern posts of the ship; the rush of water through the companion and the hatchway, or, as it rolled to and fro, knee-deep upon the deck, staving in the bulwarks; the horrid creaking of the masts, as though in very agony; the sound of the captain's and the mate's voices, which, deadened by the blast, came wafted to our ears like whispers of the unblest; the dreadful pitch and rolling of the ship; the spectacle of the uncontrollable fear of some; the silent agony of others, and the despair depicted upon every countenance; formed a combination of terrors well-calculated to unstring the stoutest heart, and to fill the sternest mind with desolation.

The utter nothingness of man, and the awful power of his Creator were here, side by side, apparent. Internal prayer was the only refuge;

for the feelings (I speak by my own) were too high-wrought to find vent in words, and were alone appreciable by a mutual glance of the eye or pressure of the hand, as, like culprits summoned to a fearful doom, we stood congregated in the humid, dimly-lighted cabin!

The reader may gather some faint idea of the imminence of our peril, from the observation made to us by the captain when we could talk over the occurrence, that during the long period of thirty years that he had been a sailor, the storm we had weathered had no parallel in the annals of his experience, and that nothing short of his own evidence would have convinced him that *any* ship could have outlived it.

After escaping from the mighty danger I have so imperfectly described, we experienced the recurrence of a *series* of gales, minor only in the comparison, which protracted our stay in the Channel or its vicinity to full three weeks; drove us to every point of the compass, and, in alternate succession, to the coasts of England, Ireland, and France, exposed to the constant chance of shipwreck upon one or other of them.

Incredible as it may appear to some, the vessel rode through these severe ordeals without the loss of any thing beyond a sail or two being blown from the yards before they could be furled. The masts, which had threatened several times to go by the board, remained standing, and not a spar was injured. Surprise will, however, cease when it is considered that the vessel and her equipments were entirely new, and made of the very best materials; besides, the real danger after all consisted, next to foundering, less in being dismasted than driven on a lee-shore, or on the Scilly Rocks.

Becoming now seriously apprehensive, and more particularly so from certain incipient symptoms which already began to manifest themselves, that our stock of provisions would fall short before the expiration of the voyage, we entreated the captain (who had in some measure recovered from his injury) to put back, and procure a fresh supply; but this he declined to do, though promising (no doubt to quiet us) to touch at the Azores for that purpose. He, however, either could not, or would not make those islands,

and adverse winds continuing to prevail, it seemed as though we might possibly have to suffer something worse than shipwreck, and the fishes might not be the only parties disappointed of their promised food. Such a contingency as dying of starvation on board a New York packet-ship, was, like the crime of parricide at Athens in the palmy days of Solon, a thing unheard of, and most certainly not surmised by any one of us when we paid the sum of thirty-five guineas for our board and lodging, whilst in a state of transitu between the two hemispheres!

The fact of the matter was, that, from some cause unexplained, the ship had been very inadequately victualled for a voyage even of the average duration; hence it resulted, that before the expiration of a month from the day of sailing, we were gradually put, *ex necessitate*, upon short allowance; being, furthermore, curtailed of one meal altogether.

But if the condition of the cabin denizens proved such, how infinitely more deplorable was that of the steerage passengers! Many of these

poor people (in so far emulating the captain, or his steward) had laid in a stock of provisions scarcely sufficient for a month's consumption, and were now, consequently, in a very distressed state; while others, miscalculating the chances of the voyage, had been at first too lavish of their edible store, and were constrained not only to economize the scanty remnant thereof, but to share it with their destitute companions, from whom, in some instances, they exacted a pecuniary consideration in return. Potatoes, having held out the longest, were at a premium that would have made an Irishman's heart ache, to say nothing of the scarcity.

But this arrangement also had its term; the common stock itself was soon exhausted, and during the last fortnight of the voyage, the steerage passengers might literally be said to have been without the means of sustenance. The ship's stock of water too was beginning to run very low.

In this state of things, these poor people, driven to their last resource, sent a deputation to the captain, the members of which, with

haggard countenances and tears standing in their eyes, earnestly besought him to grant them a portion of the large supplies which they erroneously supposed to be set apart for the cabin passengers.

He explained to them, that the impoverished state of the cabin larder effectually precluded a compliance with their request, but added (and this was a fact which transpired, by the way, for the first time), that there was a small quantity of corn on board, forming part of the cargo, to which they might have recourse, provided they could raise the wherewithal to indemnify him for the subtraction of what their necessities might require.

All, though equally willing, were not alike able to comply with this condition, which ought not, perhaps, under all the circumstances to have been exacted. The cabin passengers were then appealed to, and willingly came forward with their subscriptions, repeating them as occasion needed, to supply the deficiency.

They had shortly to partake of the same fare themselves, but did not of course pay for it.

The corn underwent a sort of rough grinding and winnowing, by a variety of ingenious contrivances, and was then converted into various coarse preparations.

I must not omit to mention that, in the height of these privations, we were about to make a most ungrateful return (though this need not surprise, since man is ever selfish) to our poor cow for the milk wherewith she had till now plentifully supplied us, by slaying her for the sake of her flesh. But she was a Yankee cow, and, with true Yankee sagacity, fell, or shammed sick, at this critical juncture of her fate, thereby saving her life and our reputation!

The terrific weather we at first encountered had finally determined the captain to steer a southern, in preference to a northern passage, though, as it afterwards appeared, we should, in all probability, have been gainers had he adhered to his original intention.

Be this as it may, southward we went, but, what with light head-winds, tedious calms, and contrary gales, in alternate succession, we were kept hovering on the edge of the gulf-stream,

without the power to cross it, for the space of a whole fortnight. At length, one Sunday morning, a favourable breeze springing up, carried us before it at a dashing rate to the opposite side in the course of a few hours, somewhere about the latitude of Norfolk on the coast of Virginia.

Here, as we met for a day or two after with mild pleasant weather, and, falling in with some coasting craft, obtained from them a small supply of provisions, we began to indulge a hope that our troubles were at an end; but the result proved the truth of the old maxim that "l'Homme propose, et Dieu dispose;" for on the evening of the second day, owing to the influence of an in-shore current, so slight that it had been disregarded, and to carelessness in sounding, we suddenly struck, and found ourselves floundering on the point of a shoal which stretched far into the bosom of the sea.

Here, then, was a new scene of trouble and anxiety, which we certainly had no right to anticipate. We had struck very lightly it is true, being at the time in comparatively still water,

and having very little wind, but we were not the less firmly fixed; and our utmost efforts to get off, by the usual expedient of backing sails, proved wholly unavailing, the only effect produced thereby being the heaving of the ship in a way to add very greatly to our apprehensions and discomfort.

The captain, though he said but little, was deeply mortified. To allay the general disquietude evinced, he affected to believe that we were in deeper water than we really were; but one of our companions, a nautical man, having judged for himself, by a cast of the lead, privately told us that we had barely four fathoms!

By one of those miracles which seemed to have attended us throughout, it proved, upon investigation, to have been low-water when we struck, so that a chance remained of our getting off when the tide should rise.

Cheered by this reflection, we hoisted and fired signals of distress; and these, being seen or heard by one of the coasting schooners already mentioned, she bore up to us, affording such

assistance as was in her power. She furnished us with a small kedge-anchor, which, being carried out with a rope attached to it, we were enabled, by working the latter manfully at the capstan, in relief gangs, to aid very materially the efforts of the rising tide, and had the unspeakable satisfaction, at the expiration of several hours' hard labour, to get the vessel off.

During these proceedings, the scene, both above and below deck, was most distressing, though not without touches of the ludicrous. Men halloing and swearing; women and children crying and lamenting; some arraying themselves in their best garments, in the hope of escaping to the shore in the friendly schooner; others selecting the effects they were most anxious to preserve; the deck strewed with scattered cordage, interspersed with boxes, bedding, and various other articles; the sails flapping against the masts; formed a combination of circumstances calculated to fill the mind with strange emotions, coupled with ever varying speculations as to the result.

"S'il y a de la poésie dans un naufrage,"

quaintly observes some French writer, " ce n'est pas celui qui se noie qui aura le loisir d'en profiter ;" and the truth of the remark came across me with peculiar force on this occasion, anticipating as I did its speedy illustration.

Once more, then, we found ourselves afloat, and time it was we were so, for, shortly after our release, a furious gale, accompanied by a snow storm, sprang up from the north-east, the effects of which must have inevitably proved fatal to us, had we been compelled to await them in our former position.

The night proved dark and boisterous, inflicting on us an intensity of suffering, both mental and bodily ; and when morning dawned, it was found that we had overshot Sandy Hook, and were running at a slant towards the point of land at the extremity of Long Island Sound. The captain, therefore, tacked and stood in for the Hook; but, no pilot making his appearance, he was compelled to proceed at his own risk, as the vehemence of the gale, hourly increasing, admitted on our part of no delay. The morning was, however, so hazy that the captain became

bewildered, and so confounded his land-marks as to mistake them altogether. Hence, while proceeding in full career, as we thought, in a right direction, the awful sound of breakers a-head came suddenly upon our startled ears, and presently the dim outline of the fearful Rockaway shore, on which (as we had already learned from a newspaper obtained on board the schooner) the unfortunate ship *Mexico* had recently been cast away, appeared frowning darkly at us through the mist in which it was enveloped. A moment's hesitation on the part of the captain, and all had been lost; this was, indeed, the crisis of our fate, and well we knew it as, rushing to the deck, we gazed alternately at each other and the appalling scene before us.

The captain nobly redeemed his nearly fatal, however involuntary, error. For the first time during the voyage, he was now seen in a state of intense excitement. Himself, springing to the wheel, "'Bout ship, my lads," he shouted; "haul away for your lives! if she misses stays, we are

lost." But the gallant ship, though she had often before missed stays, did not do so now! As if sensible of her danger, she answered promptly to the helm, bounded, like a deer doubling on its course, on the opposite tack, and we were saved! At this wholly unlooked-for deliverance, our long pent-up emotions found vent in three thrilling cheers, and, uncovering our heads, we returned to the great Giver of all good the silent tribute of our thanks, which, I doubt not, were heartfelt on the part of all, for the infinite mercy he had shewn us. A brig, evidently as much bewildered as ourselves, had been following in our wake, profiting by our leadership; but on seeing us suddenly tack, became alarmed, tacked also, and thus avoided the fate to which we were alike blindly rushing.

We now rapidly neared the light-house, and here, though with great difficulty, from stress of weather, took in a pilot, who ought long since to have made his appearance. The ship, however, could proceed no further, as the gale, which had gradually been veering to the westward,

blew by this time directly down the bay, and it was therefore resolved to cast anchor, until a steam-boat should arrive to tow her up.

This happened on the 23d of January 1837, being the sixty-third day of the voyage. Both the passengers and crew exhibited a very different appearance at the beginning and at the end of it, as may very readily be imagined. Among the steerage-passengers, in particular, bodily privation and mental anxiety had effectually done their work, and when I last saw them emerge from their unhealthy domicile, they seemed but the shadows of their former selves, being pale, haggard, and attenuated to the last degree.

From harsh treatment, by the first mate, hard service, and short allowances, the crew had shewn frequent symptoms of dissatisfaction, and on one critical occasion, as regarded weather, fairly mutinied, being with very great difficulty induced to resume their duty.

During this long and memorable voyage, it is scarcely to be supposed, particularly as we steered a southern course, that we were without

snatches of fine, agreeable weather. On such occasions we had recourse to various expedients to relieve the tedium of our position, and keep alive our spirits; but none proved so effectual a means to the end proposed, as the appearance of a diurnal paper that was started, complacently termed a "Gazette," and to which all more or less contributed. It lived about a week; and, by way of curiosity, as a specimen of editorship afloat, under *bilious* influences, I subjoin some doggrel (whereof I procured a copy), forming the concluding part of the editorial address. *Ecce signum.*

Amid the din of elemental strife,
Despite the *ennui* of a ship-board life,
The muse asserts her beneficial sway
To cheer the waud'rer o'er this trackless way.

* * * * *

Though prudence wills the hoarding of our store,
To keep, at last, the lean wolf from the door;
What! though provisions (not we) run a-ground,
If mental fare among us doth abound!
So long as there be wherewithal to dine,
At hardest fare 'twere folly to repine.
And who, when others' only food is air,
Would not forego some portion of his share?

Besides, why fear an unappeasing meal—
Is there not left some tender, choice* bull-veal?
To eke out which, will not our host provide
The corn in cargo, till that source be dried?
Let all, then, zealously their wits combine,
And yield due homage to the sacred Nine.
Let each contribute to the common weal,
Arouse his thoughts and write as he may feel.
For whilst fair Gazelles on our efforts smile,
It us behoves their lone hours to beguile.
* * * * *
May winds, propitious to our wishes, urge
Our gallant vessel through the foaming surge;
And no fresh mishaps further tend to baulk
Our hopes of landing in far-famed New York!

Naturally feeling anxious to quit the ship the moment I was able, I gladly accepted, in conjunction with several of my companions, the offer made to us by the pilot, to convey us to New York on board his schooner, he himself, however, of course remaining with the packet. But so far from gaining by our impatience, we had well nigh paid dear for it; and it was quite evident, that our old element was unwilling to

* In a facetious assimilation of the inmates of the cabin *dens*, as they were termed, to the animals of a wandering menagerie, one gentleman, from his peculiar appearance, had been designated the "bull-calf." The appellation given to the ladies was that of the "Gazelles."

part with us on the easy terms we had proposed.

By incessant tacking, and keeping close inshore, we contrived to make some little progress; but a sea at length struck our fragile craft, which made her quiver to her very centre, half filled her with water, blew her every sail to ribands, and hurled the helmsman from his post. Her flush-deck, carrying it off quickly, alone saved her from sinking beneath the weight of water with which she was oppressed. We were at this time about ten miles below the city.

"Gentlemen," said the skipper, looking down into the confined space where we were huddled like so many half-drowned rats, "I guess this won't answer; I can't attempt to proceed further, and must lie to; but if, instead of remaining on board for an uncertain period, you like to try the *chance* of getting ashore in the yawl, I will have it launched."

Bad as was the alternative, we unanimously assented to the proposal, and the first boat-load departed through a raging surf, for the

only practicable place of landing, which was a wooden jetty, projecting some distance into the bay ; the shore itself being too ice-bound to admit of a boat approaching it.

The rest followed in parties of two and three, scrambling with difficulty along the narrow jetty, the surface of which was covered with a coat of ice, and over this the waves were incessantly breaking ; but we all ultimately gained the land in safety.

Buffetted by a pitiless hail-storm, and wading through the deep snow which lay upon the ground, we made for, and successively reached, a house of entertainment about half-a-mile distant. The vanguard had already secured some rough means of conveyance to New York, whither the whole party forthwith proceeded, with the exception of one individual, an intelligent respectable American gentleman, and myself, both of us preferring to remain for the present where we were.

Inquiring for the landlord, we were ushered into the presence of a middle-aged, beetle-browed man, who was pacing up and down the room in

which we found him, and who, immediately on hearing we were from the packet-ship below, without in the least heeding our request to be provided with accommodation, abruptly accosted me with the unlooked-for question—

"Pray now, what's the price of cotton?"

"Cotton!" I replied, somewhat annoyed at the man's utter disregard of our pitiable condition, but amused withal at the strangeness of the association;—"all, my friend, that I know about cotton is, that I have not a dry thread of it upon me, and if you will have the goodness to sell me a pair of stockings of that, or any other texture, I shall be very much obliged to you."—My interlocutor regarded me with a look of unfeigned astonishment at the profoundity of my ignorance, and the presumption of my request; resumed his former promenade, and left us, with the utmost *nonchalance*, to shift for ourselves.

"Pleasant landlord," whispered I to my companion.

"Very," replied he.

"I hope," I said, "he does not present a fair specimen of the Bonifaces of your country?"

"By no means," was the rejoinder; "you will find them very different at New York: but leave me to deal with him; we must humour him, or shall get nothing."

By a brief recital of our misfortunes, my companion so far thawed our host's inhumanity, as to induce him to have set before us a comfortable substantial meal, to which, having first dried our saturated garments, it may readily be imagined that we did ample justice, after our long abstinence from any thing like wholesome food.

The next point was to get to rest, but here another contest arose; the landlord, to save himself trouble, though fully intending to charge us the highest prices, signifying his intention to quarter us not only in the same dormitory, but also in the same bed, a practice by no means uncommon in the States.

This we both stoutly resisted, declaring our intention to adopt in preference, the alternative of passing the night by the stove; so that, finding us inflexible, he at length agreed, though with a very ill grace, to accommodate us with

separate rooms. It was not, however, to his after sense of propriety that we were indebted for this assent, but to his American pride, my companion having hazarded the observation that I was a *stranger*, unaccustomed to the usages of the country.

They alone who have been in situations such as I have described, can appreciate the feeling of exquisite delight which is experienced on again reposing in a bed on shore; but, for my own part, I would not willingly incur the long privation for the sake of contrasting it with the after enjoyment.

Throughout the night in question and the whole of the day following, which chanced to be Sunday, the storm raged with unabated fury, causing my companion and myself to feel the most intense anxiety for the fate of the ship and those we had left on board her: nor was that anxiety relieved until late on the succeeding Monday, when, on reaching New York, we found her in port, where she had but just arrived in tow of a steamer.

We then learned that, in fulfilment of our

apprehensions, the ship had been in the most imminent peril, having dragged her anchors nearly three miles, and narrowly escaped being driven out to sea, with only one meal's provision on board, which had been supplied by the schooner before we left. Her owners and the New York public had given her up for lost, the more particularly as one or two packet ships, which had left England full a month after her, had reached their destination some days before she made her appearance.

Hail, glorious steam! The beneficial change which thou hast already wrought in trans-Atlantic navigation entitles thee to universal reverence. Would that, in my voyage out I had met, as I chanced to do a few months since when homeward-bound, one of the Leviathans which thou now propellest across that wide waste of waters! I would have betaken me to thy embrace, and done thee ever after homage for thy timely presence; but thou wert then unknown to wanderers o'er the Atlantic's space, henceforth thine own domain!

On the occasion of the meeting to which I

have alluded, it was beautiful to see the majestic steam-ship overhaul us at pleasure, in a light wind, and the nicety of her movements as she gradually narrowed the distance between us.

The whole scene was singularly impressive. The day was fine, the water not too rough; a brig which *we* had overhauled was sailing alongside in company, when presently up came the snorting steam-ship, which, in glorious independence both of wind and tide, ran close to either vessel in rapid succession, and, having briefly interchanged communications with each, finally shot across our bows, and, at the expiration of an hour, was lost to sight; the long streak of her smoke on the verge of the horizon, now seen as much a-head of us as an hour before it had appeared astern, alone revealing that in the middle of the Atlantic science reigned triumphant.

With reference to what precedes this episode, should any of my old fellow-passengers chance to see my feeble attempt to portray our adventures, they will recognize the picture as a faithful one, however they may deem it in other respects susceptible of improvement.

CHAPTER II.

Journey from New York to Canada.—Winter Travelling.—Adventures by the way.—American Coachmanship.—Aspect of Lower Canada.

After remaining in New York a sufficient time to recruit and transact some necessary business, I started, about the middle of February, on my way to Montreal, in company with an English party bound for the same destination, two of which consisted of a young newly-married couple.

And here, let me premise that winter travelling in North America is no pastime, as your bones will surely testify after you have journeyed some fifty miles; nor is it without its share of perils.

It took us on this occasion, full ten days to reach Montreal, though the distance from New York thence is something under four hundred miles.

The journey to Poughkeepsie, or "Kipsy,"

as the Americans call it, by way of elision, a small neat town, situated mid-way between New York and Albany, was performed on wheels, and we sleighed thence up the frozen Hudson to the latter city, against a piercing north-wester, which both driver and horses had the utmost difficulty in stemming. So regular a road had been formed along the ice, that at various places we found, much to our satisfaction, a hut erected, the interior thereof being well heated by means of a stove, and exhibiting an array of bottles, containing wherewithal to warm also the stomach of the traveller. This was a striking illustration of Yankee enterprise that could not fail to rivet one's attention.

From New York to Poughkeepsie a considerable portion of the road winds over the Fish-kill Mountains, forming a series of alternate ascents and declivities, and frequently overhanging precipices, the space between the edges of which and the wheels of the vehicle is sometimes barely a foot wide. Such roads, though bad enough at all times, are rendered next to impassable during the winter months, by floods and other

casualties, while the evil is increased by an utter disregard to the improvement of their condition, owing to the Hudson serving as the great northern highway for travelling during three-fourths of the year.

Down such declivities as I have mentioned rather than described, the horses of our conveyance would be propelled at the top of their speed, with the usual reckless daring of Yankee drivers; as though to compensate for the delay of the previous wearisome ascent; but in many cases because, paradoxical as it may seem, a slow descent would have been far less safe. It was surprising to see the skill with which the animals were guided, when the least diverging, either of them or the vehicle, to the right or left of the crumbling narrow road-way, would have hurled us to destruction. Being seated on the box, which station I selected to obtain an unobstructed view of the magnificent wintry scene exhibited around me, now catching glimpses of the partially ice-bound Hudson, now losing all traces of its track, I had ample opportunities of judging for myself of the pro-

ceedings of those to whom our safety was entrusted.

One of these knights of the whip, a smart, dashing person, who proved to be the owner of the team of fine white horses he was driving, exhibited such consummate coachmanship, at a very dangerous and intricate pass, that I could not help complimenting him on his dexterity, assuring him of my conscientious belief that no coachman in my country would dare attempt a feat similar to that he had achieved.

This effectually wound me into his good graces; but I had some reason to repent my candour, since, whenever afterwards he had the opportunity of proving himself, as he conjectured, worthy of my commendation, he would give each of his horses a knowing touch, grasp his reins with a steadier hand, compress his lips, plant himself firmly in his seat, and hurry on his former wild career; eyeing me askance, with a smile of humour upon his countenance, at the conclusion of every such performance, as much as to say, "There, stranger, what do you think of that?"

I did not care to tell him what I thought; but if truth must be revealed, he was fast bringing me to the conclusion, that I had escaped from Scylla only to fall into Charybdis; and was inducing me to draw involuntary comparisons between the wide sea-room of the Atlantic Ocean, (bad as I thought the situation at the time) and the narrow space of my present "whereabout," very much to the disparagement of the latter.

We resumed sleighing from Albany, but, the roads not being at all times adapted to it, we proceeded very slowly, suffering much from cold, and the violent jerking induced by the inequalities of the track.

At day-break one bleak morning, the vehicle suddenly stopped in the midst of a wild desolate-looking country, and the driver, opening the door, "guessed" that some one must come to his assistance, as one of his horses had dropped upon the road, and he could neither raise nor disentangle him.

I immediately volunteered my services, and, on alighting, found the poor animal in its last agonies, evidently the effect of being over-driven:

a result at which but little surprise need be felt, considering that he had completed a stage of about twenty-four miles. The driver, however, thought differently; railed at the defunct, as a a lazy "*crittur*," and declared, that there was *never* any work to be got out of him.

I reminded him that, however this might have been, his working days were now clearly over, and that judging by appearances, the remaining trio were not very far distant from the same goal; thus effectually refuting the imputation cast upon their fallen companion.

To this there was no answer, and his sophism was apparent to himself. The dead horse being, after some difficulty, disentangled, was left upon the road, and the other jaded creatures had yet to drag us nearly four miles before they could be relieved; but there was no help for it, and they were goaded forward. Getting into conversation with the driver (by whose side I had seated myself, in anticipation of a further demand for my services, but which did not, happily, occur), I represented to him the inhumanity of driving horses with such a heavy draught so

long a distance, and suggested, that it would be greater economy in the end to work them less at a stretch, as their lives would be prolonged : I was well aware, that any argument involving a question of gain, was the best to use with an American.

He pondered some time, and at length quaintly demanded, " Who's fault's that, *mister ;* the owner's or the driver's ?"

" Oh ! the owner's, of course," I rejoined.

" Well, stranger," he said, " I guess you're right; we *do* drive 'em *tarnation inhuman*, that's a fact."

On the evening of the fifth day we reached the neat, quiet town of Burlington, the capital of the state of Vermont, and situated at the head of Lake Champlain, then completely frozen over. Here we halted for the night; starting at day-break the next morning, in the course of which we met with two adventures, which are well worthy of relation.

The snow had fallen heavily during the night, so that our driver, who proved besides to be a novice, after proceeding a few miles, became

bewildered, wandered from the main road, and finally upset the vehicle, heavily laden with passengers and luggage, down the side of a steep declivity, where it lay flat upon its side; but the dead-weight had the good effect of bringing the horses to a stand still.

We escaped with a few severe bruises, with the exception of an American lady, who, being on the leeward side, had her face severely cut, though what concerned her most was the destruction of a new bonnet of some gay colour, which, for greater security forsooth, she had been carrying on her lap. She cried and lamented bitterly; not so our little countrywoman, who behaved like a heroine; and when her first natural alarm for her own and her husband's safety had subsided, laughed heartily at our misadventure.

Being uppermost, I had the advantage of the party, and having crept through the open space above me, I perched myself astride it, and proceeded to assist my companions. The first I *fished* up was the English lady, who emerged from her prison-house shoeless, so that, before I could aid the rest, I had to devise the means of disposing

of her. To this end, disentangling a couple of buffalo hides, and, spreading one of them on the snow, I placed her upon it, and enveloped her in the other. Thus squatted, she resembled (with the exception of her visage) an Esquimaux, or the expiring Don Quixote, when he is represented by Quevedo, as placed in a sitting posture between two bucklers, with his head only peering forth, like that of a tortoise from betwixt its shells.

By disencumbering it of the luggage, the sleigh was once more righted, after an hour's labour; but before resuming our journey, the perpetrator of the mischief, who had stood aloof during our proceedings, came forward, and stating with much coolness that he was not accustomed to driving (an unnecessary acknowledgment, by the way), requested that some one among us would take the reins for him. Whereupon, a volunteer came forward, and drove us very well the remainder of the stage.

The second disaster we experienced, occurred a few hours afterwards, and had well nigh been attended with serious consequences to the ladies of the party and myself. The American drivers

have a very reprehensible habit of leaving their horses' heads unleashed when they stop to bait or change teams, and in the States there are no such persons as ostlers to stand sentry over them. On one of the latter occasions, we had all alighted with the exception of the two ladies, and were awaiting in the porch the exit of the driver from the house. The horses, which had just been put to and were very fresh (by no means a corollary in the States), finding themselves at liberty, became impatient, and presently bolted with the vehicle. Alarmed for the safety of the two females, and yielding to a natural impulse, I sprang forward, and by a great effort reached the near wheeler (if I may so designate a *sleigh*-horse), whose check-rein I seized just as the four animals were breaking into a gallop. Him, I speedily mastered, but, as ill-luck would have it, the driving-reins had been cast on the opposite side, and I found it impossible to gain either them or the near leader's head; so that after running till I was fairly spent, I was reluctantly compelled to cast myself off, and, seizing a favourable moment, threw myself into the deep

snow beyond the track, in order to avoid a salutation from the sharp runners of the vehicle, leaving the horses to continue their rapid flight, increased too as it had been by my abortive attempts to check them.

The behaviour of my countrywoman on this, as on the former occasion, was most praiseworthy, and the courage she displayed rendered still more conspicuous the want of it in the fair American.

So long as there remained a chance of my succeeding in my efforts, she retained her seat with the greatest coolness and self-possession, and I heard her encouraging her companion to do the same; but when, on finding that the case was hopeless, I exhorted her to spring into the deep snow, she at once boldly acted on my suggestion, and was speedily followed by the American, impelled by the example set her and the increased terror which came upon her at finding herself alone in such a situation. Both, fortunately, escaped without material injury, as did also the sleigh and horses, which were stopped, after a run of two miles, by some labourers who chanced

to be working on the road; and our effects were restored to us in safety.

When I got back to the inn, the driver, instead of thanking me for my exertions (fruitless though they had been) to repair the effects of his carelessness, contented himself with remarking: "I guess, mister, if you'd been more smart, you'd ha' jumped a top o' that ere animal" (the horses were *only* at the top of their speed, and I, heavily clad, floundering in the deep snow). "I guess," I replied, "you had better have tried that experiment yourself, since you think it so easy." In fact, it is to be doubted if even Ducrow himself could have performed such a feat of agility.

But upsets and runaways are too common in the States, to be associated in the minds of the people with ideas of danger, and the accidents arising from them are treated with much levity.

The Canadians are not much better; and I remember being told of a case of negligence which once occurred somewhere on the road between Montreal and Kingston, whereby the lives

of nine or ten stage passengers were all but sacrificed. The horses had been left, as usual, unleashed at some halting place, had started off, run a considerable distance, and the passengers, unaware of their danger (the leathern curtains of the sleigh being closely drawn to keep out the cold), were only awakened to a sense of it, by suddenly hearing the crashing of ice, and finding themselves floundering in deep water. They escaped with the utmost difficulty, and the horses, I believe, were drowned.

I mention these occurrences less from any interest now attaching to them, than that they may serve to put upon their guard those of my fellow-countrymen who may have occasion to travel through the northern parts of the North American Continent in the winter season. When the navigation is open the case is different, and there are no greater dangers to be encountered than elsewhere.

The Canadian steam-boats are, however, much more pleasant and commodious than those of the States; the latter, besides, being generally crowded to excess, and though presenting a very

animated scene, nevertheless, a scrambling one by no means pleasant.

I must narrate a little incident which I once chanced to witness on board an American steamboat. We were just sitting down to a repast when a lady, exhausted by the combined effects of the jostling and scrambling incident to the occasion, and the heat of the weather, uttered a loud scream, and forthwith fainted away. All was again confusion, in the midst of which up stepped a young interesting-looking American female to direct operations, claiming a right to do so, on the ground that *she herself very often fainted*, and knew the proper remedies. Attention being diverted to her by this public announcement, she seemed about to enter on a learned disquisition respecting the philosophy of syncope, accompanied by illustrations in her own person, when her design was frustrated by some one suggesting that the patient had better be carried up stairs into the fresh air, a simple and effectual remedy which the fair lecturess seemed to have entirely overlooked. It is so unusual for American ladies to put themselves

thus prominently forward, that one could not help being struck with the love of display conspicuously manifested on this occasion. The lady in question had already been holding forth on deck, with much apparent eloquence, on various erudite subjects, and clearly belonged to the sisterhood of blues.

But to conclude my journey. At one part of it, we had taken up, as a transient passenger, a young American woman of the middling class, who after she had sat some time in silence, eyeing our party with much apparent curiosity, suddenly accosted one of them with the observation—

"I guess, stranger, that's a very nice shawl you've got," (meaning a large merino travelling shawl which he wore.)

"I am glad you like it, Miss," was the answer; "your judgment proves my taste."

"Would you let me look at it?"

"Certainly." Whereupon, the party disentangling it from his neck, placed it in the fair one's hands.

Having spread it, and satisfied her curiosity

as to its quality and texture, she observed, that it was very much like one belonging to her mother!

The owner of course expressed himself as much honoured by the coincidence.

"You wouldn't like to part with it now, would ye?" was the next inquiry.

"I guess not; I am going to Canada, and should feel the want of it."

"Well, now, *what* are you going to that cold place for? you'd better stay in our fine country, that's a fact."

The gentleman availed himself of this opportune turn in the conversation to divert the attack upon his shawl, which might otherwise have ended in the usual proposal to barter, so pleasantly illustrated by Captain Marryatt.

It is startling to one accustomed to the sort of religious reverence with which the mail-bag is regarded throughout England, to witness the utter disrespect with which it is treated in America, being there a sort of foot-ball both for passengers and drivers, and never allowed to interfere with their convenience.

If there be a mail-bag to deliver of which the place of consignment chance to lie a little out of the line of route, the driver will content himself, in nine cases out of ten, with depositing it by the way-side, and, winding his horn to signify his having done so, proceed on his journey, without troubling himself any further about the matter.

I have myself seen this; while, on one occasion, I remember, the driver, suddenly discovering that one of his mail-bags was missing, "guessed" that the "tarnation bag" must have been dropped on the way, and "calculated" he must have the trouble of going back to look for it. For a wonder he did so, and sure enough, after retracing our steps about a mile, there lay the cause of his retrogradation.

Generally speaking, I think that there exists in the States less desire to pilfer than in most other countries; partly, no doubt, because there is less general want on the part of the community, and, consequently, less temptation to be dishonest, and partly because there prevails amongst them a greater degree of pride and self-respect. A striking illustration of this remark came

within my own experience. I had dropped, unconsciously, in a vehicle, in the process of alighting from it, my pocket-book containing a considerable sum of money. Whilst the passengers were seated at dinner, the driver appeared with the pocket-book in his hand, and inquired if any one of us owned it. My right to it was soon established, and the finder, of course, rewarded for his conduct, though I had great difficulty in inducing him to accept any thing. Had he chosen, as he might readily have done without the fear of detection, to appropriate the money to his own use, my embarrassment would have been great in the extreme; for, until I could have obtained a remittance from my friends, I should have been left wholly without the means to prosecute my journey.

Traits of this character deserve to be recorded whensoever they present themselves, since, unfortunately, they are of very rare occurrence.

About the eighth day of our journey, we entered Lower Canada, reaching the village of St. John's at midnight, all but frozen.

After leaving Albany, the traveller is gradually

made sensible of his approach to the regions of the north, by the increasing chilliness of the atmosphere around him, as it becomes more rarified; and is right glad to aid his natural caloric by adding to his already warm clothing.

We had long passed the imaginary boundary-line, ostensibly separating the two countries, before we ascertained that we were on Canadian soil, being first enlightened to the fact by the novel sound of the French language, and a difference of appearance in our driver, who was now clad in the not unpicturesque Canadian costume, consisting of a grey great-coat, with a sharp-pointed hood thrown over the head, trousers of the same material, a crimson sash round the waist, stocking-boots with red turn-over tops, and, finally, a pair of fur gloves.

This is the general dress of the male peasantry, or *habitans* as they are termed, though their appearance is in general much less gay than that of the class of persons of whom our Jehu was a specimen.

The cloth whereof their outer garments are made, is for the most part home-spun, and is,

in such cases, held in high estimation by the wearers.

The garb of the female peasantry has nothing characteristic about it, with the exception of the fur bonnet, but exhibits the same tastelessness as the attire of corresponding classes in England.

The permanent impressions, of whatsoever tendency, which are left upon the mind on our first visiting a foreign land, are not unfrequently influenced, though, perhaps insensibly to ourselves, by the time and circumstances under which that visit may be made. For these reasons, I would counsel, on the strength of my own experience, all those who, unacquainted with Canada, may design to visit it, not to do so in the winter season if they can possibly avoid it.

A snow-storm in the wilds of Canada, can alone find a parallel for the intensity of its desolation in a winter hurricane on the Atlantic, or a whirlwind, with its accompanying sand-drift, on the great desert of Zahara, and equally with them is it to be dreaded.

We were weather-bound at St. John's during the next twenty-four hours, a heavy fall of snow

having succeeded the fine clear weather which had preceded our arrival. Our impatience to get forward induced us to make several attempts to penetrate to Laprairie, distant some twenty miles, but they proved unavailing; and we were fain to retrace our steps, after being twice or thrice dug out from a deep drift, in which sleigh, passengers, and horses were nearly buried.

On the ensuing day, a road having been formed, we again started, and were this time more fortunate; reaching without accident, though tardily, the banks of the St. Lawrence, which now lay before us in all the desolation of its wintry grandeur.

Viewed from Laprairie, you have some difficulty in conceiving that water rolls beneath the noble river's white expanse, and still less that water ever held, or could hold, the place of that snow-covered domain. In this respect, you might indeed almost be pardoned for indulging in the scepticism of the Turk or the Hindoo (I forget of which the story is told), who had equal difficulty in understanding that ice could be

formed out of water, even though the fact was illustrated to him by artificial means.

The width of the angle which intervenes between Laprairie and Montreal, is between seven and eight miles. Seen in the distance, with the sun shining brightly on its tin roofs, Montreal has a pleasing appearance, and at the season of which I now speak, it fairly bore to me the semblance of an Oasis in the desert.

To one unaccustomed to the performance, it is a somewhat nervous operation to cross in a vehicle on the ice, so wide an expanse as the St. Lawrence; particularly when, attaining midway, you regard the space, whether before or behind you, which separates you from the land, and hear the ringing, if not cracking, beneath the horses' feet, of the frozen surface you are traversing, long-reverberated, too, as is the hollow sound in the distance.

On the occasion of which I speak, our crossing was rendered more than usually tedious and painful by the combined influence of bad horses, and the inequalities of the track, which, from the lateness of the season, had been worn down

into a complete series of undulations, forming what the French Canadians term *cahots*, and causing our vehicle to rebound from one alternate convex point to the other, with an effect upon us somewhat resembling that produced by the passage of a vessel through a rough short sea.

The sleigh, with its entire cargo, must have contained a burden of not much less than a ton in weight, and was drawn by a *trio* of horses, driven *tandem-fashion*, the leader of which would frequently turn short round, causing a general entanglement, and look us ruefully in the face, as though in tacit reproach of our obstinacy in urging him forward on a road-way so precarious.

Nevertheless, we reached the northern bank in safety, despite of even the driver's expectation, and were at length, to my extreme satisfaction, comfortably housed in Montreal.

CHAPTER III.

Comparison of Montreal and Quebec.—Quebec Cathedral.—General Description of Lower Canada.—State of Society.—French Canadians.—Town and Rural Population.—Insurrections of 1837 and 1838.—Influence of the Priesthood.—Amusing Anecdote of a Parish Pastor.—Political Reflections.

MONTREAL and Quebec have been too often and too well described to require further illustration; nevertheless, a passing observation in regard to them may not here be out of place.

The more ancient parts of either city much resemble many of the old provincial towns of France; the modern parts, on the contrary, partaking more of an English style and character, in the greater width and cleanliness of the streets, and better construction as well as more comfortable aspect of the houses.

The majority of the streets, however, as well of Montreal as of Quebec, are dark, gloomy, and narrow; much of their *sombre* effect arising

from the dark-grey stone whereof the houses and edifices are built. The glittering tin roofs by which these are surmounted, afford some little relief to the general monotony; but the effect which they produce upon the eye when the sun is shining brightly on them, is very distressing, and when thereto is added the reflexion of the solar rays from the snow, the sight has to undergo a trying ordeal.

A very scenic effect is produced by the agency of these tin roofs, if a fire (as is frequently the case) chance to take place at night in the winter season. Their glitter, in combination with the lurid glare of the flames, relieved by the surrounding snow, and a clear blue moon-lit sky, completes a *tableau* perfectly *unique*, such as it is well worth your while, how cold soever may be the temperature, to start from your bed to witness.

But, in Montreal, there are two special practices, which serve to disturb you in your bed without offering you any inducement to quit it, and break your rest for nothing.

The first is the incessant clamour of a bell, swinging in an old isolated turret, near the Ca-

tholic cathedral, the *nugæ canoræ*, of which, while serving to summon the faithful to their devotions, inflict a purgatorial punishment on all other hearers.

The second practice is incident to the occasion of a widow or widower being rash enough to re-enter the state of matrimony. When the fact becomes known, the young men of the town, disguising themselves in masks and the most grotesque attire, proceed on horseback, in large parties, to the dwelling of the happy couple, which they encompass, and forthwith greet its inmates and the whole neighbourhood with the most hideous noises produced by the agency of all sorts of instruments of discord.

This superior sort of marrow-bones-and-cleaver performance is termed a *charivari*, and takes place at all hours of the night. It has for its object the levying of a pecuniary tax on the victims it selects, to be applied to some charitable purpose. If the parties come forward voluntarily and liberally they are exempt from further annoyance, but otherwise they are subjected to an indefinite repetition of the serenade,

at the will of their tormentors, who eventually succeed, in nine cases out of ten, in exacting the required tribute. Serious rows have sometimes resulted from these nocturnal celebrations, and the interposition of the authorities has occasionally been necessary.

The practice, I believe, is a corruption of an old French local custom, on the occasion of second marriages, when (as I have understood) the bride and bridegroom were compelled to keep open house for a certain number of days, and to feast, *ad libitum*, all comers of their own sphere of life.

The signs of progression and of stationary habits are no where more strikingly conspicuous than at Quebec and Montreal; and no where, perhaps, are domestic contrasts of almost every kind exhibited in more varied shapes.

Side by side are seen the modern commercial store and the ancient secluded convent. Here appears the harbour enlivened by an array of British shipping; there, the lingering remnants of primitive inactive life. Jostling each other on the narrow causeway, or grouped in the wider square

or market-place are the red-coated soldier of England and the cowled priest of France; the antiquated *habitant* of the country in his home-spun suit of grey, and the spruce denizen of the town attired in the latest European fashion; the swarthy Aborigine of the soil, enveloped in his blanket, with his squaw carrying her *papoose* at her back (the little creature not *always* exhibiting in lineament a purity of race), and the British artisan or labourer in his peculiar garb; while, to crown the whole, the alternate sound of two conflicting languages, breaking on your ear at every step you take, leaves you momentarily undecided as to whether you be not in some provincial town of France or England; the first impression, moreover, being strengthened by the general appearance of the streets and houses; and the last, by the British designation of many of the thoroughfares and the preponderance of British names along their line of frontage.

Upon the whole, and notwithstanding the greater severity of climate, I should give the preference to Quebec, over Montreal, as a place of fixed residence; though, in a positive sense,

neither city holds out any allurements to a person who has been accustomed to a metropolitan life in Europe; and as to means of intellectual enjoyment, there are few or none.

The general tone of society is decidedly higher at Quebec than at Montreal: a fact which may probably be accounted for, by the former having been so long the seat of government, and the great military station; as also, perhaps, in some measure, by the circumstance that a more remote position has caused the habits and manners of the people to be less imbued with the characteristic roughness of the neighbouring Republicans.

This taint becomes, indeed, more sensibly apparent in proportion as you advance up the country from Montreal; and by the time you reach Upper Canada, you may not, in respect of language and behaviour, unaptly fancy yourself as being within the confines of the States. Let any one, for instance, who has had the misfortune to sojourn for a day at Cornwall, or at Prescott, say if I be not borne out in this conclusion; while in various parts of the country

you hear just as much "guessing," "calculating," and "howing," (the execrable interrogation for what) and encounter just as much expectoration, and other repulsive habits, as you can possibly meet with in the New England States themselves.

Next to the Cape and Citadel, the object at Quebec which most fixed my attention was the Catholic Cathedral on the market-place, or rather I should say the interior of it; the compactness and style of which I thought infinitely superior to its more aspiring rival at Montreal. The gilded roof and ornaments within the Quebec Cathedral, combined with the general antique appearance which pervades the whole interior, imparted to the scene when I visited it, towards the close of a fine autumnal day, an effect which an artist would have been delighted to reproduce on canvas. There was about the place a refinement, an unpretending sanctity, a subdued tone of piety, forming a combination, though wholly undefinable, yet appealing at once to the feelings and inducing involuntary meditation. On the occasion mentioned, propriety

was not outraged by extortionate demands for the privilege of seeing what every one possesses an inherent right to see, the enforcement of which tribute at the shrine of mammon forms, in exclusive England, a feature of such hideous prominence; but ingress to the Cathedral was quite as free and unimpeded as at any of the sacred edifices of continental Europe.

For some miles below Quebec the country is extremely picturesque, but further on, it becomes, though majestically grand, rude, wild, and barren; exhibiting a series of bold precipitous rocks, rapid torrents, and uncultivated plains; and offering, in fact, few or no attractions to the settler, or even to the tourist. The beautiful Falls of Montmorenci, about nine miles below the city, are a constant object of attraction to the inhabitants of Quebec; pic-nic parties in the summer, and sleighing parties in the winter, being frequently formed to visit them.

Between Quebec and Montreal, the scenery itself along both lines of parallel, exhibits nothing of a particular character, the country being almost one continuous flat, the general mono-

tony whereof is relieved only at wide intervals on the south shore, by the outlines of a few widely scattered mountains seen dimly in the distance. Nevertheless, the almost unbroken line of villages fringing either side of the St. Lawrence, almost down to the water's edge, is not without its charm, and lends a grace to the noble stream, fully equal in its kind to that imparted to the Rhine by its castellated towers; to the Thames by the sweet domesticity of its scenery and villas; or to the Hudson by its majestic highlands—its gorgeous array of wooded banks and variegated foliage.

To a stranger unacquainted with the stationary, unimproving habits of the French Canadian peasantry, the appearance of these neat looking villages would indicate a much more advanced stage of progress than in reality exists; while the fact is that, for the most part, they are but the screen to a comparatively empty space beyond, extending as they do only a very little way inland. This is especially the case on both shores upwards, as far as the confluence on the southern side, of the waters of the Richelieu with those of the St. Lawrence; when the two

streams, diverging from each other, in the same manner that water is seen to separate when striking on a point, leave between them a gradually increasing triangular space of very considerable dimensions at the base, which is probably the best cultivated part of Lower Canada, and forms indeed its granary. Almost every village, or settlement, within this district bears a saintly appellation; but the patrons or patronesses seemingly exercise, in one sense, but little salutary influence over the minds of their devotees, who are as notoriously fertile of disaffection as is of grain (despite of a barbarous mode of husbandry) the soil they cultivate.

North of Montreal, and extending to the lake of the two mountains, the country is tolerably well cultivated, as it is also from Montreal upwards to the borders of Upper Canada; and the scenery, when divested of its wintry dress (which qualification must be considered as of general application to any descriptions I may attempt), is in some parts very striking and picturesque, though quite dissimilar in character to the European style.

Scattered throughout the settled districts, are farmers of British origin, who have gradually introduced the most improved methods of cultivating their lands, which may at once be readily distinguished from those of their French Canadian brethren by their very superior degree of fertility and general condition. In some few cases, the French Canadians have followed the good example set them, but they are too much the slaves of prejudice and habit to persevere in such imitations. Formerly, I am told, the French Canadian farmers were in the habit of throwing the dung yielded by their cattle into the river, instead of using it as manure, and many of them continue the practice to the present day.

The country surrounding Montreal, and extending far beyond the confines of the island, when seen on a fine day from the summit of the high mountain just behind the city, and from which the latter takes its name, presents a *tableau* which would be unsurpassed, both in loveliness and grandeur, were it only diversified by hill and mountain, of both of which

it is wholly devoid. Here, you see the noble St. Lawrence, winding majestically amidst its numerous, deep-wooded islands; there, its worthy tributary, the Ottawa, half-encircling in its embrace the fair island, on whose highest point you stand; beneath you, the populous city with its tin roofs glittering in the sun; before, behind, and around you, as far as the eye can reach, fields teeming with verdure and vegetable life, the whole agreeably interspersed with rural villages and hamlets.

Yet how sadly has this smiling picture of peace and plenty been marred on two occasions by the headstrong folly and perversion of those who were insensible to the manifold blessings they were in effect enjoying! Free from taxation; unrestricted in their religious worship; devoid of those cares and anxieties which weigh down the European peasant; and reaping, in fine, the full fruit of their industry; to the full extent the antiquated laws of their blind idolatry will permit.

I know of no condition of life, where mere animal comfort constitutes the desideratum, more en-

viable than that uniformly enjoyed by the French Canadian peasantry until they mistook their position and gave the rein to the latent passions which had been insidiously awakened in them; and a close observer of their condition would at once have been struck with the conviction, that if they lacked any portion of happiness or prosperity, the cause lay entirely in their own want of energy, and not in any oppression practised towards them by their rulers.

Arriving in Canada with only the average stock of knowledge in regard to the country and its inhabitants, which the generality of Englishmen possess, I had much to learn before I could attempt to form judgments upon points that invited my attention. I was aware that dissensions of some standing among its inhabitants had had the effect of arresting its prosperity, by impeding the development of its natural resources; but I had yet to discover the *precise* nature of those dissensions; their proximate or remote causes, and the incentives or secondary causes which contributed to perpetuate their existence.

The result of my inquiry, undertaken from

a spirit of curiosity and a habit of investigation, rather than from any specially defined object at the time, was to trace, at a very early period, the discord which I witnessed to a single source; that source being no other than, what a far abler pen than mine has emphatically described it, the collision of two distinctive races of people.

This discovery filled me with the greater regret, because on a *primâ facie* view, it seemed to preclude the expectation that the evil, after so long a growth, could be remedied otherwise than by measures of coercion, which, however justifiable they might be, would not the less bear the outward semblance of oppression. I soon further ascertained, that the line of demarcation which separated the British and French portions of the population, was not merely political in its character, but that it involved as complete a severment of all social relations between the two parties as could possibly be defined.

I was grieved at the last consideration on my own account; for having passed some years of my life in France, and imbibed a sort of predilection for good French society, I had antici-

pated much pleasure from again mixing in it, even at second-hand; conceiving, as I did, and not unnaturally, that the better classes of the French Canadians, however they might lack the polish and refinement of European members of their race, would be at least free from many of their prevailing vices, and would exhibit, as a consequence of a more primitive condition, some of the better qualities which characterized the French of the olden time.

I found, however, that the French Canadian inhabitants of the towns, taken as a body, were very far from answering to my *beau idéal.* It was not difficult to see that the minds of far too many of them, the rising male generation in particular, were impregnated with the most vicious principles, unredeemed by such virtues as could alone counteract their effects, nor to perceive that these were daily acquiring strength.

Though the cause at first appeared ambiguous, this circumstance was in a great measure satisfactorily explained to my mind, when I learned that the majority of the young men, designed by their parents for professions, were sent to France

to complete their education; and that the study of English, as compared with French literature, occupied but a very slender portion either of their time or their attention. I should be sorry to be understood as reflecting, by implication, in the foregoing remarks, on the seminary at Montreal, since I believe that institution to be, though susceptible of much beneficial remodelling, a very commendable one; and I have witnessed examinations within its walls which would have done credit to many European establishments of a higher standing.

Had proper measures been taken at the conquest of the colony, to insure in it the supremacy of the English language—a measure which would have been rendered justifiable, by the fact of the French inhabitants becoming thenceforth British subjects—the result, we may be well assured, would have been widely different.

The influence of language upon mind—of mind upon habit—of habit upon conduct—needs no illustration. A variety of harmless means might have been devised for disseminating the use of the English tongue among the great body

of the people, so as to cause it imperceptibly, but surely, to supersede in time the prevailing idiom. But what do we see at the expiration of eighty years' occupancy of the country? A partial knowledge of the English language, confined almost exclusively to the French Canadians of the towns, and the great mass of the *habitans* unable, in nine cases out of ten, to understand you if you address them in it!

The employment of the English language in all judicial, legislative, and executive proceedings, and in all public records; the establishment of schools, elementary and normal, wherein it should be taught to the rising generation; the gratuitous distribution of English elementary books; the frequent introduction of British Catholics among the priesthood; and, in fine, the institution of premiums for proficiency, would have formed, conjointly, a combination of means highly conducive to the attainment of the end in question.

Who that is alike conversant with the two idioms, will venture to gainsay the assertion, that since the period of the first French Revolution,

the literature of England, defective though in many respects it be, is immeasurably superior to the contemporaneous literature of France, not only in its degree, variety, and general merits, but, above all, in point of moral tone, correct sentiment, and genuineness of feeling?

Let us suppose then, as the result of the course of proceeding herein-before suggested, the French Canadian population to have been imbued during the last fifty years with such a literature as that just mentioned, in lieu of the one, its very opposite, they have in effect cherished: is it hazarding too much to say, that we should have found them in regard to moral culture, and hence in regard to a sense of moral duty, as affecting attachment to British institutions, a very different race of people? or that the substitution of the one course of study for the other, would have given *insensibly* to the general current of their thoughts an entirely new direction? Instead of seeing, as now, the mass of the French Canadian youth perusing with avidity the levelling doctrines, the false sentiment, the revolting depravity, the gross obscenity, which collectively

stain the pages of *so much* of the French literature of the age, we should have found them possessed of a taste for the more moral productions of the English school, and cultivating that taste with a similar degree of assiduity to that they now display in a less ennobling pursuit.

In this lamentable state of things, in a colony nominally British, but virtually the converse, we have another glaring instance of the general culpable neglect of England, in all that relates to the momentous question of popular education; a neglect which dims the lustre of her otherwise untarnished grandeur, and renders her almost a by-word among nations.

Were it not that neglect in this respect constitutes too general a feature in her conduct, we might not unnaturally conclude that the exhibition of it in Canada formed part and parcel of the short-sighted policy with which she has throughout acted towards that country; as though, in very truth, British statesmen, recoiling at the prospect of a remote democracy, should Canada contain an united people of British growth and origin, revelled in the hope of being

able to rear and to perpetuate, by the unnatural means employed, an effectual barrier to its progress!

The success of any well-digested scheme to Anglicise fundamentally the character of the French Canadians, had the attempt been made at an early period, when the materials to work upon were comparatively of a pliant nature, cannot now, with propriety, be doubted; how far, in the present desperate state of the case, any tardy endeavour to rectify the flagrant error that has been committed, and to regain lost vantage-ground, can prove effectual, is quite another question; but the attempt, at any rate, is still well worth making.

In all times and ages it has been the judicious policy of nations that have acquired fresh territory by conquest, to assimilate as much as possible to their own condition, the people whom they subjugated. By England alone, in the case of Lower Canada, has this wise precaution, of adopting, by degrees, a transferred race to their altered circumstances, been lost sight of; and the consequences are now beginning to be felt.

From the effects, either of the folly or the recklessness of British statesmen during a long series of years, the present tenure of Lower Canada admits of comparison with nothing else than the armed possession by England in former days, of one of her old hereditary provinces in France; a tenure which exposed her sons to indiscriminate slaughter and expulsion, whensoever the subjugated native should have the opportunity of rising against them, taught as he had sedulously been, from his earliest years, to regard them not as fellow-subjects, but as the rank usurpers of his birthright, and his oppressors.

There was only this difference between the respective cases, that in France, neither from local circumstances nor by moral means, could any permanent amalgamation of the two races possibly be effected; whereas, in Lower Canada, there was no such impediment to contend with, until England voluntarily placed herself in a false position, when she might have shaped at will the key-stone of a long-enduring arch of safety.

As regards the French Canadian rural popu-

lation generally, I would say, as the result of close personal observation of their character, that, *apart* from the *working* of the *inherited* feeling of national animosity to the British race, which rankles more or less deeply in the breasts of all, in common with their brethren of the towns, and which is hidden or betrayed, but never slumbers, just in proportion as it is acted upon by casual events, they are, in the main, an orderly, quiet, inoffensive set of people, who would not of themselves resort to violence, unless under circumstances of very extreme provocation; nor rush into mischief without very strong appeals being made to their latent prejudices and passions.

Though lamenting the degrading bigotry and superstition, inseparable from their state of ignorance, I have not been the less gratified at observing, in connection therewith, the extreme propriety of conduct and demeanour which characterizes them when congregated in their places of religious worship. I have, however, occasionally been much amused by the oddities of some of their rural pastors when holding forth

to them, in the vernacular, from the pulpit; and who, in their familiarity of style and diction, could not have been surpassed by any corresponding propounders of Catholicity to rural ears in even good old Ireland.

I remember, on one very hot Sunday afternoon, strolling into a village church, when the *prédicateur*, a little short punchy man, whose rubicund countenance, just peering from above the pulpit, exhibited every symptom of an inherent aversion to Lent, was holding forth with great vehemence and gesticulation, the perspiration running the while copiously down his cheeks.

Having concluded a long peroration, he was beginning a new sentence, commencing, "*Jésu Chree*," (Jésus Christ), "*mes enfans, vous savez;*" when observing the church-door to be open, which, besides admitting air, also admitted the noise of some urchins from without, he suddenly vociferated, "*Fermez cette porte là, que—*" From his manner I really apprehended he was going to add "*diable*," but he left the sentence unfinished, and resumed his discourse with "*Vous*

savez, mes enfans, que Jésus Christ a voulu— a voulu, je vous dis." He had now, however, either from the interruption or the heat, or from the combination of both causes, quite lost the thread of his discourse, and could evidently proceed no further; whereupon, far from being abashed, he took out his snuff-box, still pronouncing, with a pause between almost every letter, the words "*Jésu Chree;*" helped himself to a lengthened pinch; deliberately raised his small black tonsor; wiped his reverend face and forehead, and exclaimed with the utmost simplicity of manner, looking very complacently around him, "*Il fait bien chaud, mes enfans.*" The whole scene was inexpressibly ludicrous. The perfect ease and *nonchalance* of the preacher; his strange appearance; the mixture of the holy with the profane; the singular conclusion; but, above all, the reiteration of the Saviour's name in association with the snuff-box, so played in combination upon my risible propensities, that I was compelled, in the excess of my heresy, abruptly to quit the church, convulsed with inward laughter; though, to their credit, and to my shame, be

it said, not a smile moved the muscles of the features of a single member of the Catholic auditory.

Besides indulging in the practice of seeing them at their devotions, I have mixed familiarly with them in their domiciles, and, being able to converse with them in their own language, was soon upon the best possible footing with them. I am satisfied, from the experience both of others and myself, that had my countrymen in general, in former times, been more unbending in their demeanour towards them, and made them feel less sensitively their inferiority of condition, their asperities at the present day would have been at least softened towards us, though, certainly, nothing short of their *complete amalgamation* with the British race could have removed their inherent antipathies. In proof of the deep-seated nature of those antipathies, I only need record the frequent candid avowal of those who entertain them: "*nous vous aimerions, peut-être, à la distance, vous autres; mais nous ne vous aimons point de près.*" As they *had been left* the free use of their own idiom, it was always a point of feeling with me (apart from the necessity of doing so,

from their general ignorance of English), to address them in it, even as I would the poor degraded Indian, if I knew his tongue; and I have uniformly remarked, that it made all the difference in their reception of you, whether you addressed them, howsoever courteously in English or familiarly in French. In my conversations with the peasantry of whom I speak, I was at first surprised at the want of interest they evinced in regard to the land of their ancestors; but their indifference may be accounted for by the long period which has elapsed since the severment of their political connection with that country.

As the qualification of much that I have said of their social condition generally, it is right to observe, that many shades of difference exist betwixt the various local communities, and that the leaven of present and future discord has been gradually instilling itself into the system of the primeval state of harmony, heretofore peculiarly their own, by the dissemination amongst them of new tenets and fallacious doctrines by young medical practitioners, notaries, and lawyers, who settle in their villages and hamlets, after completing, as I have already stated, their

studies in France; or, as is also very frequently the case, in the United States.

Allowance being made for some exceptions, the worst portion of the French Canadian peasantry is decidedly to be found along the south shore of the St. Lawrence, from Beauharnois downwards to Sorel, and between such length of shore and the south-east borders of the United States. Next in degree come those inhabiting the country within a deep semi-circle, encompassing three sides of Montreal. Lastly, between Montreal and Quebec, and below the latter city, are probably to be found the least contaminated of the French Canadian peasantry, an impression which is confirmed by the manner in which they conducted themselves throughout the respective insurrections; though, on the other hand, it could not be doubted, if appearances might be taken as an index, that had success on either occasion dawned upon the efforts of their brethren in arms, they would have thrown off the mask, and risen almost *en masse*.

With respect to the British part of the population of Lower Canada, it is of a very mixed

character, the prominent portion of it, however, being composed of persons who are engaged in commercial or trading pursuits; the agriculturists of British race are comparatively few, and are thinly scattered throughout the settled districts; hence their *extreme danger* in times of popular commotion arising out of national dissensions. The Eastern Townships, as they are termed, contain a population essentially British, though interspersed with some American settlers, who have been attracted thither by the superior fertility of the soil, and the improved mode of culture generally practised. Much of the beef consumed in Montreal is supplied from these Townships, and the adjacent State of Vermont, and it is of a far superior quality to that brought to market by the French Canadian farmers, who, in general, give themselves very little trouble about grazing, or improving their breed of cattle. Corn is the staple, to the raising of which they devote the greatest share of their attention, and Jean Baptiste* is always well-content when (first amply

* The *sobriquet* given to the French Canadians.

supplying his domestic wants) he can exchange it for *l'argent sonnant*, as he terms silver coin, large quantities of which (as paper money is his aversion), are annually substracted by him from circulation, to be hoarded as a heir-loom, in old stockings, night-caps, or such-like purses, within the privacy of his dwelling.

The British population, with a few individual exceptions, necessarily pull together, because of their intuitive sense of a common danger, from their being environed by a foreign race, whose hostility to them is felt to be *in grain*, and who, on their part, are influenced by a somewhat similar feeling, though certainly without an equal cause of apprehension. But for these fears, inducing as they do a mutual repulsion of the respective bodies, and closely cementing in themselves the component elements of each, it is perhaps questionable whether the British population would not be divided into the same minute particles of party-difference that characterize their more wrangling brethren in the Upper Province. In their religious sectarianism, they are already pretty much alike, and

are equally prone to polemic strife on points of religious difference.

The first event worthy of notice that happened in Lower Canada after my arrival, was the suspension of specie payments by the banks, at the request of the community, in consequence of a similar general suspension throughout the United States, induced by the great commercial crisis which had taken place there. This measure, which circumstances rendered unavoidable, and which the necessity fully justified, being timely resorted to, proved, in a pecuniary sense, the salvation of the province, inasmuch as it enabled the banks to support the commercial community at a moment when they peculiarly stood in need of such assistance.

As I propose, however, to devote specially a few pages to the subject of banking in Canada, I shall reserve any further remarks upon it for a future chapter.

Throughout the summer and autumn of this eventful year, the public mind had been kept in an almost constant state of agitation and alarm, by the proceedings of the leaders of the

French Canadian party in various parts of the country, and an apprehension of imminent but indefinable danger, was beginning to be universally entertained. Impunity begetting confidence, meetings of the most treasonable character, which had been at first held secretly at midnight, were now held unconcealedly in open day. Public drills, in large bodies, next succeeded; and these were followed by weekly reviews, which generally took place on the morning of the Sabbath, after the hour of mass.

Throughout Lower Canada the Sabbath is indeed the grand day, even in peaceful times, with the French Canadians for the transaction of business of a public nature; and strange exhibitions take place at the church-door, where, as the congregations issue from the edifice, they are addressed by individuals charged with the duty of expounding to them the merits of sheriffs' sales, and public announcements of every kind.

The agitators of the period availed themselves of this ancient usage to address their willing auditories on the palatable topics of virulent abuse of the British government and people; praise of

the patriotism and disinterestedness of the immortal Papineau ; plans for the advancement in all earthly prosperity of the incipient "*Grande Nation Canadienne*," whereof the attentive listeners were represented as choice specimens ; fierce denunciations against red-coats, accompanied with insinuations of their wearers finding ere long free quarters without rations in the St. Lawrence ; the whole string of invectives being wound up with three cheers in favour of that very public, yet practically unknown personage—Dame Liberty.

Curiosity induced me frequently to visit the scenes as well of this peculiar oratory as of the drills, because at both strong points of national character were constantly elicited. Though the whole matter was becoming somewhat too serious to be made a source of amusement, I am bound to confess, that much of what I witnessed was of that ludicrous character to make me almost forget, at the moment, the danger which lurked beneath it.

Some of the drill scenes, in particular, the marshalling and arraying of the recruits, and

the manœuvres practised, were mighty rich ; but it was not the less evident that the performers were becoming at each rehearsal more proficient in their new vocation, and might soon be converted into formidable opponents.

All these proceedings, it was obvious, must end in something more than child's play ; and a doubt naturally suggested itself to the minds of many, considering the great numerical disproportion between the two respective races, and the mere handful of troops then in the country, whether the approaching torrent *could* be stemmed.

The British inhabitants, however, far from giving way to despondency, began to see that their main reliance must be upon themselves, if they would avoid the dreadful calamity which their being found unprepared, would entail upon them and their families.

For a long time, fruitless applications were made to Lord Gosford, or, as the French Canadians termed him, " Milord Goose-fort," to sanction the formation of the loyal inhabitants into corps ; nor was it until the eleventh hour

that his lordship could be brought to understand the real nature of the danger, or to free entirely Sir John Colborne* from the shackles in which his relative subordination placed him. When *carte blanche* was at length given to Sir John to act as circumstances might require, he immediately adopted the most vigorous measures, and the alacrity with which those measures were seconded by the gallant race of men interested in their promotion, proved how well *they* were aware of the difference between the ostensible and the real objects of the hostile party.

As a measure of precaution, the different banks of Montreal sent down about this time their specie to Quebec, for safe-keeping in the citadel.

In the midst of all this incertitude and consternation, not the least expectation either of American interference in behalf of the insurgents, or of a simultaneous rising in Upper Canada, appeared to obtain. If any looked to these contingencies, they wisely preserved silence; for the promulgation of any fears of this kind—particu-

* Now Lord Seaton.

larly on the latter point, as the people confidently looked for aid from the sister province—would, probably, have been attended, from the greater degree of depression it would not have failed to create, with the most fatal consequences.

One palpable sign of the times, not to be mistaken, during the progress of the insurrection, was the waning influence of the Catholic priesthood over the minds of their hitherto docile flocks. Not only did the insurgents treat with contumely the remonstrances of the pastors to whose injunctions they had before been blindly subservient, but intimated to them, in many cases, that their interference might be attended with peril to themselves. This, however, so far from acting deterringly on the clergy, stimulated them to renewed exertion; for they knew and felt their interest as a body to be identified with the maintenance of British authority, which alone secured them in their possessions; while, on the other hand, they were no less sensible that were the chain of their moral influence once broken, the success of their countrymen must

entail upon them the same ruin and devastation that overwhelmed the clergy in France during the first revolution there. Just in proportion therefore, as they became sensible of the real nature of their position, so did they direct their efforts to check the progress of the insurrection; and upon the whole they succeeded marvellously, considering the powerful re-action with which they had to contend.

There were, nevertheless, many cases of defection in their own ranks, as was strikingly exemplified in the respective instances of the parish priests, who were found combating on the side of the insurgents at St. Charles and St. Eustache; but, taken as a body, the French Canadian Catholic clergy remained ostensibly faithful to their allegiance; and, under such circumstances, it is scarcely worth while to inquire how far their national sympathies *might* have been enlisted on the other side, had not their personal interests been at stake.

It would be, at best, a doubtful advantage to the French Canadians to emancipate themselves by forcible means from their present religious

thraldom, without being first prepared for the rational enjoyment of such freedom, by an enlightened course of education.

An incidental occurrence, which took place on the 6th of November, brought prematurely to a crisis the disease I have been describing, and precipitated the designs of the French Canadian party, who had intended to defer their execution until the navigation of the St. Lawrence should be fairly closed.

The day in question had been fixed upon by the rival parties each to assemble, and afterwards to walk in procession through the streets; of course with the object of a mutual exhibition of numerical strength.

Justly apprehending that the peace of the city would be endangered by such a proceeding, the local magistracy issued a proclamation, warning the inhabitants generally to remain at home, and exacted privately from the leaders of either party a promise that they would exercise their influence to prevent the proposed assemblage.

This promise, the British, on their part, faithfully adhered to, and their efforts were successful;

but the French Canadians either violated theirs, or were ill-obeyed; since, in the course of the afternoon, a body of about two hundred of their partizans, mostly carrying sticks, converged, from various quarters of the town, towards a tavern, situated between St. Paul's and Saint James's Streets, which run parallel, and having in its rear a large stable-yard with gates opening on the latter thoroughfare, the best and widest in Montreal.

In this yard they congregated, and, according to the reports of strangers who got amongst them, harangues, surpassing all former treasonable displays, were uttered, and a resort to violence, though not on that occasion, more strongly than ever recommended.

Whilst this was going on, some members of the British party, incensed at the violation of the pledge given in the morning, planted themselves in front and rear of the meeting-place, and parading the Union-jack, with jeers and shouts, defied the would-be Romans to issue forth. This, the latter abstained for a long time from doing, as the number of their besiegers

(though not exceeding at the utmost fifty men and boys,) had been so magnified, that they were filled with a very terror; and, according to all accounts, so far were they from manifesting anything like warlike ardour, that their only anxiety was to get safe home.

The house in which I resided nearly faced the entrance to the stable-yard, so that I could witness in safety all that was passing; hence, being struck with the extreme folly of our people, who were by no means justified in interfering, and who, even otherwise, were too feeble to resist should they be assailed, I remarked to a friend who was standing at the window with me, that they would surely have cause to repent their temerity.

I had scarcely uttered the words, when a loud shout was raised, and presently, uttering hideous yells, out-rushed the besieged, who had now learned how few were their challengers, into the open space before me, which they cleared in a twinkling, striking right and left with their sticks.

By this time, my friend and I had gone down

to secure the street-door, but before doing so, we half-opened it, whereupon admittance was implored by several of the fugitives, and of course granted to them, one of the individuals so sheltered just escaping a blow aimed at him with a heavy bludgeon, by one of his pursuers.

On resuming my station at the window, I found that the assailants had made a halt, and were conferring as to their further proceedings, sentries being placed at the corners of the cross streets, branching right and left, and hurling down them an incessant shower of stones.

Never did I gaze on such an infuriated band of ruffians, and, making allowance for the difference of attire, their whole appearance and demeanour might not unaptly realize our conception of what must have been in reality the scenic-represented followers of Masaniello. Nevertheless, it was quite evident that, although elate with their petty triumph, they were very uneasy at the position in which they had placed themselves, and I am quite satisfied from the blended expression of their countenances, betraying as they did both fierceness and anxiety, that they

found it necessary to lash themselves into a state of furious excitement, in order to subdue their fears, and would have been right glad to escape without doing further battle.

That they had anticipated the possibility of having at least to act upon the defensive, was apparent in the first instance, from the majority of them being armed with sticks, and had any doubt remained on this point, it would now have been removed, as weapons of a more deadly character began to display themselves, and I observed, in particular, one ferocious-looking fellow to draw from a side-pocket a most formidable two-edged knife, full twelve or fifteen inches long.

Their chief leader was a very fine young man, named Desrivières, a clerk in the Banque du Peuple, who deported himself in a manner that would have graced a nobler cause, and whose example certainly went far to inspire his comrades with a temporary confidence. From their excited state, it required the utmost efforts, both of himself and others, to marshal them in anything like order.

After much wavering and indecision as to whether they should keep together or scatter, they at length decided on the former course, and, screwing their courage once more to the sticking place, raised another shout, and rushed tumultuously up the street towards the Place d'Armes, clearing all before them, and hurling destructive missiles at the windows of obnoxious individuals.

On reaching the Place, they were encountered by a reinforcement of the British party, which, on the first defeat, had been summoned to the rescue, and a general *mêlée* ensued, during which much severe punishment was inflicted on both sides, though happily no lives were lost. Both parties claimed the victory on this occasion, and perhaps with equal justice: the French Canadians succeeding in getting home in small parties down the numerous cross streets, notwithstanding the attempt to intercept them; and the British remaining in possession of the scene of conflict, which it was evidently not the object of their opponents to retain.

The self-styled "Doric Club," an unautho-

rized association, whose acts were sometimes intemperate, claimed to itself the whole merit attaching to this ambiguous, and at best ignoble, triumph, with no greater justice, that I could ever learn, than that a few of its members chanced to be present.

I must not be understood as seeking, in these remarks, to extenuate in any way the conduct of the French Canadian party. On the contrary, I consider it to have been highly culpable; though that of their opponents was, in the first instance, assuredly no less so.

From never having seen a faithful version of this affair, I have been induced to be thus particular in my account of it; and as I was a passive spectator of the whole of the proceedings, from first to last (having followed the rush which took place up the street), I trust that my statement may be at least considered an impartial one.

Viewed in the light, that out of evil frequently comes good, the occurrence in question cannot certainly be regretted, inasmuch as it hastened, by effect, the advent of an impending mischief

whilst there existed greater means of counteracting it.

After the dispersion of the insurgents to their homes, some companies of the Royals, which had been called out in anticipation of further disturbances, were distributed in various parts of the town, and remained picquetted throughout the night; but their more active services were happily not needed. Prior to their appearance, the British party, elate with the result of the past contest, had proceeded to the printing-office of the "*Vindicator*" newspaper, a most seditious journal, edited by the notorious Dr. O'Callaghan, where they destroyed the whole of the type and printing apparatus; the building itself narrowly escaping demolition.

The troops, however, prevented the commission of further mischief of this nature, and saved M. Papineau's house from destruction, towards which the British were hurrying, when they met the soldiers advancing in double-quick time. They immediately greeted them with enthusiastic cheers, and accompanied them quietly in their perambulations through the town.

In the course of the evening, the houses of several suspicious characters were searched, and in one of them was found a seven-barrelled gun, together with a flag inscribed with a treasonable device, both of which "signs of the times," were of course carried off as trophies.

The news of this day's proceedings spread like lightning through the country, and the *émeute*, being magnified by report into a mighty battle wherein the French Canadians came off victors, was received with acclamation by the credulous deluded peasantry, who forthwith proceeded to acts of open violence against the scattered British population dwelling on the south side of the St. Lawrence, and in the country to the rear of Montreal.

On the other hand, constant arrests were made by the authorities, both in Montreal and elsewhere, though in some places it was perfectly useless to attempt enforcing warrants that were issued.

A few days after the riot in Montreal, a small party of volunteer cavalry, whilst escorting from St. John's a noted rebel who had been captured

there, was daringly attacked within a short distance of Vaudreuil, on the St. Lawrence, by a considerable body of armed insurgents, who were lying in ambush in a wood, bordering the road. The horsemen, being far outnumbered, were compelled to abandon their prisoner and retreat; making, indeed, their escape with difficulty over the open country, there closely intersected with barbarous fences.

On learning this occurrence, and that the whole district of the Richelieu was in a state of open insurrection, Sir John Colborne determined to strike a decisive blow, by transporting the bulk of the small military force at his disposal into the very heart of the rebellious country, before the contagion should spread to other quarters; and he trusted to the great moral effect to be anticipated from a signal victory, as a powerful after-auxiliary to his means of preserving order.

Hence, he concerted the plan of operations which terminated in the respective actions of St. Denis and St. Charles, although intended to centre in a combined attack upon the latter place.

Owing as much to gross mismanagement as to the inclemency of the weather and the bad state of the roads, the detachment under Colonel Gore, which, proceeding upwards from Sorel, was to have effected a junction with the detachment under Colonel Wetherall, coming from Chambly, was, as it is well-known, miserably repulsed with severe loss, and compelled to retreat, leaving Colonel Wetherall to do the best he could, single-handed. How well the latter succeeded in the object of *his* enterprise, as also in extricating his gallant followers from the perilous situation in which they found themselves placed, from the failure of the proposed junction, is likewise too much a matter of history to require that I should enlarge upon it here.

The circumstances which marked the return of the two detachments to Montreal, where they arrived within a few days' interval of each other, exhibited a very striking contrast; and never, perhaps, was defeat or victory more forcibly personified than in these respective cases.

The detachment from St. Denis landed almost stealthily at night; its men torn, maimed, suffer-

ing, and dejected, dragging their weary, benumbed limbs to the solitude of their barrack, and seeking to avoid the gaze of even the few spectators who had assembled on the wharf to greet them. The detachment from St. Charles, on the contrary, landed in the full blaze of day, amid all the pomp and majesty of triumph; marching through the town with colours flying, preceded by its band, and accompanied by a long string of prisoners that had been taken.

Yet were the officers and men of either corps all equally brave and gallant soldiers. Their repulse and their success respectively, were mainly the result of the imprudence and the foresight of their two commanders; and no better troops ever went into action than those who stormed and carried the Stockade at St. Charles, or those who dauntlessly, but fruitlessly, assaulted the stone walls of St. Denis, when worn with the toil of a long night-march, through terrific weather, half-frozen, and in a state of inanition.

The lights and shades of the two events themselves, being of this nature, it may readily be conceived that the moral effect which they in

turn produced on the minds of the mutually hostile portions of the community, were quite in character and keeping.

On the first occasion, for example, dismay was depicted on the countenances of the British inhabitants—silent joy and incipient triumph on those of the French Canadians. On the second, these symptoms were reversed, the parties changing places; while the French Canadians who had not the same control as the British over their emotions or their passions, might now be seen, in groups or singly, scowling hatred and defiance, shedding tears and wringing their hands, as though in bitter anguish, or muttering imprecations as they went. The women, in particular, I observed to be deeply afflicted, in consequence, as I presumed, of their having heard of the loss of some relative or friend in the action, since many French Canadians of Montreal were known to have crossed the St. Lawrence for the purpose of joining the insurgents on the southern side.

During the absence of the troops from Montreal, on the desperate service in which they had been engaged, every possible precaution for in-

suring the safety of the city had been taken. Volunteers performed the whole garrison duty, maintained an efficient night watch in every direction, both stationary and by means of small parties of armed horsemen, who patrolled the streets at regular intervals. At all the chief outlets, strong barricades were raised and heavy ordnance mounted, so as to command the road leading to the open country, and pieces of light artillery were kept in readiness, to be served at any point required at a moment's notice.

In the interregnum between the affairs of St. Denis and St. Charles, a sort of lull prevailed, betokening, in effect, how great was the hidden danger; for it was well-known that the French Canadians in Montreal, in conjunction with their friends in the vicinity of St. Eustache, were only awaiting favourable tidings for their cause from St. Charles, and which to the very latest moment they confidently expected, to assault the British inhabitants of the city: a contingency for which every man among the latter felt it necessary to prepare himself, and

which, he was fully sensible, must involve the extermination of the one party or the other.

For several days succeeding the disastrous business at St. Denis, the supremacy of the insurgents was so far insured as effectually to cut off any intercourse between the authorities in Montreal and Colonel Wetherall. Hence, the anxiety of the British population for the fate of the gallant band under his command, was, for some days, painfully intense, and this tortured state of feeling was augmented by the reports constantly promulgated by the opposite party, that the whole detachment had been slain, captured, or dispersed.

The impression was now beginning to be very generally entertained, that, even if this small force should escape annihilation by retreating on Montreal, the whole of the south shores of the St. Lawrence must be abandoned to the will of the insurgents, and that the troops with the British population must shut themselves up in Quebec and Montreal until reinforcements should arrive. Nor was this an irrational con-

clusion, considering that a small force of less than three hundred effective men was encompassed on all sides by thousands of a hostile peasantry, imbued with feelings somewhat similar to those which animated the Spanish rural population against the soldiery of Napoleon: that is, feelings of the most deadly national animosity, rendered, in this case, the more violent from having been so long latent and subdued.

But discipline and valour signally overcame the fearful odds that were opposed to them; and, by common assent, the invincibility of British troops, which had been for a moment doubted, was again fully established.

The decisive business at St. Charles immediately re-opened the communication with Montreal, and the arrival of the messenger who brought the intelligence, was hailed by the British population with feelings such as I should vainly endeavour to describe, but which may be readily imagined when it is stated, that had the result been different, Montreal would have been attacked in force that very night.

The day happened to be Sunday, and at

the moment when the steam-boat, having on board the messenger, reached the wharf, the different edifices of public worship were pouring forth their congregations. The animated scene which ensued, all parties being alike eager, I have still vividly before me. A general rush was made down the narrow streets which lead from the Rue Notre Dame and the Place d'Armes to the wharf, but long before the fact itself was generally promulgated, loud and long-repeated cheers from the British had announced to the panic-stricken French Canadians the destruction of their hopes and expectations.

As shewing the nature of the feeling which prevailed among the better class of that party, I will relate part of a conversation which I chanced to overhear, on my way home from the wharf, on the day in question, between an elderly lady and gentleman, the former of whom was standing at an open window, eagerly interrogating the latter as to the nature of the news.

"Et les troupes sont donc victorieuses?" said the querist.

"Hélas! oui," replied her companion.

"St. Charles pris, dites vous?"

"Non seulement pris, à ce qu'on prétend, mais brulé—détruit, enfin!"

"Que sont dévenus *nos* gens?"

"La plupart tuée ou prisonnière—le reste épars et en fuite!"

"Dieu de dieu!" exclaimed the old lady, wringing her hands; "quelles horreurs que vous me racontez là! que ferons-nous? que deviendrons-nous?"

"Faut espérer," replied her companion, shrugging his shoulders, and looking as resigned as he could; which expression, with its significant enforcement, I readily interpreted to imply, "better luck next time!"

The splendid achievement of Colonel Wetherall had for the time so effectually broken the spirits of the French Canadians throughout the Richelieu district, that Colonel Gore, at the head of a second detachment, was placed in a condition to traverse it, not only without encountering the least resistance, but receiving every where the unqualified submission of the *habitans*.

In the course of this expedition, the body of the unfortunate Lieutenant Weir was discovered, whose cruel murder, as my readers will remember, formed a striking episode of the previous campaign. It was conveyed to Montreal for interment, the ceremony of which was rendered most imposing by the presence, as mourners, not only of almost all the troops in garrison, but of the majority of the ward and volunteer companies, all carrying their arms, and forming a grand funeral procession of *several thousand* men, amongst whom I enrolled myself, a humble unit; though the cold was so intense that I could with difficulty hold my musket, and felt fairly tempted, as did many others their's, to cast it away.

It was a truly affecting spectacle to see almost the entire male British population, of every rank and age, thus voluntarily turning out to pay the last tribute of respect to the unfortunate young officer then borne before them to his last resting-place. The scene, too, was interesting from its novelty and the peculiarity of the associations connected with it. The burial-place lay in the Quebec suburb, extending towards the

open country. Fancy, then, the appearance, towards the twilight of a Canadian winter's day, when all was hushed around you, save the solemn military requiem, of a body of men four deep, and several thousand in number, brought out in strong dark relief against the pure white surface they were traversing in solemn funeral procession, with arms reversed! Embody in your mind a picture of this kind, and you will have some faint outline of the appearance of the throng which followed to the grave the remains of poor Lieutenant Weir, whose savage murderer, though long in custody, has not expiated his offence.

I have no doubt that the sight I have attempted to describe, produced upon such of the French Canadians as witnessed it,—and there were many present,—a very sensible effect; since, being themselves great respecters of religious observances, they must have been deeply impressed with the solemnity of this; while, on the other hand, the formidable array of armed men must have exercised on them a salutary influence not easily to be shaken off.

The subsequent expedition of Sir John Col-

borne, against St. Eustache, which proved in all respects successful, completed the subjugation of the insurgents, so auspiciously begun by Col. Wetherall, and effectually removed all *present* ground of apprehension on the part of the loyal population. For a short account of that expetion, I cannot, perhaps, do better than refer my readers to the first part of Captain Marryatt's lately published "Diary in America," as embodying, in relation to it, the leading points of interest.

At this period, I chanced to be on my way to the Upper Province, and, simultaneously with the news of the signal victory which had been gained, I heard, not, I must own, without surprise, of a partial insurrection, which had wellnigh proved successful, having broken out in the environs of Toronto, and that the situation of the country rendered further travelling unsafe.

Inured, however, by this time, to perils similar to those predicted, I was not to be deterred from the prosecution of my journey; and, accordingly, first procuring weapons of defence, I proceeded onward, reaching Kingston without further

disaster than that of an immersion through the ice at St. Ann's, after a successful attempt to rescue my luggage, which had preceded me in essaying the temperature of the water.

Though all was saved, everything, even to my papers, was completely saturated, and then frozen on exposure to the air; while I, also a frozen mass, was constrained to return to the little village I had lately quitted, where, on seeking refuge in the inn which gave me welcome, I of course became once more a dripping body pending the operations of thawing before the fire and disrobing, which last I did not unnecessarily delay. Discomforts such as these, however, are trifles light as air, viewed in comparison with the greater mishaps one generally encounters in the progress of a Canadian long winter journey; particularly at the commencement, or at the close of the season, when the roads are adapted neither for wheeling nor sleighing, and the ice is as about as treacherous as the smiles of a coquette.

But a more dangerous period still for traversing the St. Lawrence, is when the ice, fairly

broken up, is floating down it, frequently in large fields, and mostly in fragments very dangerous to the navigator.

On such occasions, the passage is performed in canoes, worked with paddles, and at the bottom of which you are often constrained to prostrate yourself in order to avoid capsizing, or sometimes to incur the risk of leaping from the canoe upon a piece of floating ice, (to the consternation of a cluster of wild-ducks which you thence dislodge), and trusting to the chance of your after salvation.

Having once an urgent necessity to traverse the stream at this particular period, I embarked in one of the frail conveyances I have mentioned; but I had well nigh paid dearly for my temerity, and received a lesson which, while it would deter me from repeating the experiment, warrants me in recommending no one to hazard it who sets any value on his life.

As regards the second insurrection, that of November 1838, which broke out in Lower Canada, I need only observe that, varying localities and dates, it resembled in its leading features

that which had preceded it; excepting only that the rising was on a somewhat larger scale, the plan of operations more matured, though equally defective, and the means of aggression more formidable, but productive on both sides of less loss of life.

The insurgents, after committing many acts of wanton cruelty and destruction on the persons and property of the isolated British inhabitants, during the brief interval they were enabled to maintain themselves in arms, were, at first, repulsed at all points, by the gallant conduct of the volunteers and regular troops; being finally dispersed at Stanstead, their head-quarters, where they had assembled in considerable numbers, by the mere approach of Sir John Colborne at the head of his disposable force.

This second rising had been confidently predicted, long before its actual occurrence, by all who were impressed with the conviction that deep-seated incurable national animosity, rather than mere political grievance, was the sole originating cause of the first outbreak. Of this number I was always one, and I saw and heard

enough on re-visiting Lower Canada for a short space, in the course of the summer, to convince me, that on the approach of winter, the scenes of the former one would be fully re-enacted.

A few reflexions here naturally suggest themselves as to the causes, proximate or remote, of the lamentable state of things I have been endeavouring to portray.

It has been the lot of the French Canadian peasantry to be made the fulcrum of a lever poised for their own ambitious but short-sighted views by a few designing, unprincipled individuals, possessing local influence, and supported by the countenance given to their proceedings by a set of men in England, to whose opinions an undue importance was attached, but who either did not understand the merits of the cause they advocated, or wilfully distorted its every feature for mere party purposes. The ready handle to this lever has been alone, the latent national animosities of an otherwise inert mass of human beings, whose anti-British prejudices and feelings, unable to withstand the violent inflammatory appeals made to them, have been roused for the time

into a state of dangerous activity, and left with a susceptibility whose keenness cannot be allayed either by mildness or coercion, and which can only be gradually obliterated by the physical preponderance of a British population, in a ratio similar to that of a moral character at present so strongly marked between the two races.

The doctrine that power rests of right with the majority is a rule which, however arbitrary in its general application, yet admits of marked exceptions; and in no case, perhaps, that the records of history might furnish, has the necessity of acting on the exception rather than the rule, been more strikingly exemplified than it has in the case of Lower Canada.

It is only on an hypothesis which the modern great human family repudiates, namely, the subjection of the moral to the physical, that the pretensions of the French Canadians to unqualified supremacy in Lower Canada can be at all established. Their mere numerical superiority does not invest them, as they have been taught to believe, with the supremacy they claim; because, in effect, it is unaccompanied by a corresponding

or even a proportionate degree of moral excellence, which could alone exalt the social condition; and still less by accumulated wealth, so indispensable an element of progressive improvement.

The real question to be considered has always appeared to me to rest on this simple issue: either Great Britain is the rightful possessor of Lower Canada or she is not. That she is so, cannot be disputed so long as the tenure of conquest, confirmed by treaty, continue to be recognized by nations as a legal title of investiture. Hence, it must be obvious, that so long as the *British part* of the population be *desirous* to preserve the existing connexion with England, or so long as, by mutual assent, the maintenance of British supremacy be requisite for the attainment of a common end, namely,—the perpetuation of British institutions,—whatsoever in the colony is, *per se*, anti-British, is of necessity inimical to its interests; because such causes act as direct impediments to the promotion of its prosperity, by retarding the development of its resources.

Let me not be understood by these remarks as

arguing, by implication, the removal of obstacles of this nature by coercive measures. The remedy I would suggest is the gradual *adaptation* of a hostile race of men to the altered state of things around them; the *primary* element of which change must be (if not too late for the experiment to succeed) an extensive immigration.

If we come to the abstract question of the right of occupancy, founded on priority of claim, we shall find that the French Canadians themselves are just as much usurpers as those whom they are desirous to expel; and that, on this ground of argument, the territory must revert to the aborigines, or poor despoiled Indians.

The insurrection that has twice broken out in Lower Canada, and been twice timely suppressed, is too strongly marked with a distinctive character to admit of doubt, that it has its origin in the germ of national antipathy, which, sown at the conquest, has acquired strength, vigour, and intensity in its growth, just in proportion as it has been acted on by outward influences, and that (in the words of Lord Durham) as regards the present generation, it ab-

sorbs every better feeling, and is wholly irradicable. If at all justifiable, the insurrection of the French Canadians would have been as much so *at any given period* within the last eighty years as it is now, or would probably be eighty years henceforward!

The question may perhaps be asked, why if *nationality*, and not mere incidental dissatisfaction arising from political causes, were the mainspring of action of the French Canadians, they never before attempted to achieve their independence? The answer to such inquiry is a ready one. Before their minds were so strongly impregnated with the pernicious doctrines inculcated by those whom of late years they have recognized as their legitimate leaders, as to induce them to indulge their present day-dream, that they possess the wherewithal to "set up for themselves" as an independent people, they *felt* that their alternatives lay between remaining under the dominion of Great Britain, or becoming incorporated with the United States; and they have preferred the former as the lesser evil, if for no better reason than that they were

already accustomed to the one, and knew nothing practically of the other. Hence, they remained passive, and this interested passiveness has been mistaken for loyalty by those whose knowledge of human nature should have taught them better things. Again, the danger of their being displaced, as the aborigines had been by them, by a succeeding race, if apparent to them, was yet not imminent; or, it might be, that, estimating the progress of others by their own, they conceived, having the start, that they should be always able to maintain the preponderance in point of numbers, which with them was, and still is, every thing. Latterly, however, this fancied security gave way to fear; the hated Saxon population, despite of every attempt to check it, was fast treading on their heels, and must in time overtake them; while this powerful incentive being applied to the already kindled flame of their *ingrain* feeling of hostility, served but to spread the conflagration.

Their error has consisted in arrogating to themselves a right which they do not possess, founded on the abstract question of their distinc-

tive race and origin, and in believing that numerical superiority was, of itself, more than an equivalent for the want of moral strength.

To suppose that they *could* maintain themselves as a people, independent either of Great Britain or the United States, has been the greatest of all their delusions, except the belief that the American citizens would help them in the furtherance of their immediate objects from disinterested motives. Their separation from England would, in fact, only *accelerate* the period when they should become merged in the great Saxon family, and be, politically speaking, altogether lost sight of as a distinctive race of people; whereas, the continuance of their connexion with England for a further series of years would enable them to adapt themselves and their posterity to this their unalterable destiny. Prior to the closing scene of their political existence, Yankee sympathy would have dealt strangely with their privileges; their possessions would have passed into other hands, and they would have become literally "hewers of wood, and drawers of water." The bondage imposed by the Egyptian would have been light to theirs.

In the intensity of their desire to gratify the feeling of hatred which animates them against the British name and race, they strangely lose sight of the evil consequences which their very success would entail upon them. That such should, however, be the case, is scarcely surprising, considering the *nature* of the all-absorbing feeling in which they allow themselves to indulge; as also the truth, which experience teaches, that communities, like individuals, are but too apt to forego a prospective good for the gratification of a present desire, involving a mingled feeling of hatred and revenge.

Yet, for these desolating consequences as of late exhibited in Lower Canada, is the British nation itself far more to blame than are the French Canadians.

They have been left a nationality, quite distinctive from that imposed by their change of condition, and this has been fostered, with a degree of infatuation almost incredible, by the very parties who now express surprise and complaint that it should have a tendency to produce the effects we witness. Inconsistency carried to

such a length amounts to positive cruelty, and would justly recoil upon its promoters were it not that the question at issue now involves the interests of third parties, who are wholly guiltless. Viewing the matter, as for reason's sake we are bound to view it, in this light, we have, strictly speaking, no right to accuse the French Canadians of *disloyalty*, since we have neglected to plant in them the seed which should produce the converse feeling. The French Canadian argues thus:—"My allegiance," he says, "being a forced one, I owe you no fealty, and hold myself justified in seeking to throw off your dominion, whensoever I may see an opportunity of succeeding in my object. If you *can* keep me down, I cannot of course help myself, and must submit; but be assured, that the least laxity on your part will be the signal for my rising against you." Hence it follows, that resistance to British rule assumes in his eyes the character of a virtue, and not a crime. We may accuse them of *ingratitude*, but that is all: we cannot rationally hope to see them what our safety requires that they should be, unless we

sedulously ingraft upon their nature the elements of conversion:—we cannot otherwise do justice either to them, or to ourselves.

Let, then, even at this eleventh hour, the task be undertaken. Let it be considered that, apart from political objects, the exclusive claims of the French Canadians are powerfully counterbalanced by the claims of the British portion of the population to be insured a permanent position on the soil of their birth, or which they have adopted as their country, on the strength of the belief they have been allowed to entertain during three-fourths of a century, that they planted themselves and their posterity, *not in a foreign land*, of which they might one day be dispossessed by *its natives*, but on a part of the British territory.

Without the entire sacrifice of this part of the population, forming, as it does, nearly one-third part of the whole in point of numbers, and a vast majority in point of moral capacity and wealth, the control of the affairs of Lower Canada could not be conceded to the French Canadians any more than it could be to the

Native Indians, if these were to prefer a claim similar in effect.

In a word, the integrity of the nation, no less than the welfare and safety of the British inhabitants, and of the French Canadians themselves, imperatively requires that, without the exercise of the least cruelty or oppression, the latter should be kept under (speaking in a political sense) until, by means of immigration, all numerical disparity between the two races shall have ceased, and, further resistance being thence hopeless, a gradual amalgamation shall be effected between them by the all-powerful medium of education.

The object to be attained is not a temporary, but a permanent one; it is nothing less than the perpetuation of the British race existing on that section of the North American Continent, where it is vitally essential, as I shall endeavour hereafter to show, to the welfare of Great Britain herself, to consolidate British institutions; or, rather, perhaps, the spirit which animates them, and operates as a means of improving the condition of the whole human race.

In comparison with such an object, the extinction on British soil, of a state of things representing the semi-barbarism which existed in the provinces of France a century ago, cannot surely be a cause of regret; or the prejudices of a people bent on preserving an obsolete nationality, repudiated by the spirit of the age, and by the spread of enlightenment around them, be allowed, in the estimation of any reflecting person, to weigh as a feather against the argument of adaptation hereinbefore advocated.

Independent of the other primary means suggested, namely, immigration and education, for operating this important change, the abolition on equitable terms of the feudal tenure, (of which, more hereafter,) and the train of incongruities it involves, is a most essential auxiliary, and, even as an abstract measure, would be imperatively called for.

To conclude, the French Canadians having, by their late recourse to violence, justly forfeited every title to a continuance of the exclusive privileges, which, whether by a false reasoning, a false humanity, or a false policy, they

have been heretofore considered to possess, have themselves offered to the British Nation the opportunity of doing with them that which should have been done when they first became British subjects—adapting their condition to our own; and we may be assured that the last and only chance of repairing the original error has now presented itself.

I propose to offer a few concluding remarks on this interesting and important subject, in a future chapter, embodying some reflexions on the question of the Legislative Union, and other matters therewith connected.

CHAPTER IV.

Kingston. — Mackenzie's Outbreak. — Repeated false Alarms.—Series of Invasions.—Affair of Hickory Island.—Consternation of the Kingstonians thereat.—Conversation with an old Indian Warrior.—Destruction of the British steam-boat *Sir Robert Peel*.—Further Irruptions into the Province.—Mission of the Earl of Durham.—American Conspiracy against Canada.—Hunters' Association.—Invasions at Prescott and Windsor.—Result thereof.—Final Disposal of the Prisoners.—Remarkable Events of 1839.

KINGSTON, the chief naval depôt of Upper Canada, is a pleasantly situated little town of some four or five thousand inhabitants, and possesses, in point of locality, many natural advantages. The social attractions of the place itself are pretty much upon a par with those of Toronto, hereafter to be described; but its habits are essentially of the unprogressive order, and it reposes somewhat too complacently on its assumed dignity to be otherwise than stationary.

Upon an eminence across the bay stands Fort Henry, which commands the approaches by the

river, and also the town itself, in every direction. As a military station, Kingston is one of some importance, and by further artificial means might readily be converted into a very strong position, being in a great measure the key to Lake Ontario. It is nearly equi-distant from Toronto and Montreal, or about one hundred and eighty miles from either. In its general appearance it much resembles a large English village, but is somewhat stragglingly built, though possessing in its *fashionable* parts some very substantial houses.

It is in the neighbourhood of Kingston that the Provincial Penitentiary has been erected; an establishment which, generally pretty well stocked with inmates, is conducted on much the same principle as the state prison at Auburn, in the United States; that is, the prisoners are allowed to work in each other's company, but not to converse together.

Among the minor characteristics of Kingston, I must not omit to mention the endless out-door squabbles of its pigs and dogs, both of which domestic animals infest the streets in shoals; and

are as great a nuisance as dogs alone are said to be at Constantinople. A ruthless war is waged by the canine upon the swinish multitude, and, as these have a peculiar way of acknowledging such courtesies, the effect of the din of voices in discordant eloquence, may readily be conceived. In Toronto, the case is merely varied; there, dogs and cows, in lieu of dogs and pigs, are seen in deadly contest; the tortured cows being driven about the streets in every direction by their tormentors.

On reaching Kingston, about the middle of December 1837, I found the inhabitants labouring, as might naturally have been expected, under the greatest degree of excitement and alarm at the political events which had taken place; the usually quiet, sanctimonious little town appearing, in effect, to be completely shaken out of its propriety.

Men, arming hastily, were enrolling themselves in corps to meet they knew not what: a danger menaced them which they could not grapple, because of their inability to define it: almost every one regarded his neighbour, or the

comrade at his side, with a feeling of distrust, as though he were a rebel in disguise, and more ready to turn his weapon against him, should occasion offer, than to wield it in his defence.

The general zeal and alacrity displayed were praiseworthy in the extreme, but the false alarms were endless, producing sometimes very ludicrous effects upon the minds and actions of different individuals.

It is, and ever must be, a very questionable matter, whether even the success which crowned the tardy effort to arrest Mackenzie's treasonable proceedings, justified the extreme hazard of allowing them to terminate in open insurrection.

The *real* peril incurred by this result, was the exhibition to the American citizens of a state of things which sound policy would have studiously laboured to withhold from them; for, if the portal admitting a pretext for their interference were once opened, there was no foretelling how long it might be kept ajar.

Looking, therefore, beyond mere local circumstances, the experiment of invoking a dan-

ger by tolerating it, for the sake of proving that it *could* be repelled, was somewhat an unnecessarily gratuitous one; nor did there apparently exist any greater cause in the then condition of Upper Canada than there exists at the present moment, to warrant the conclusion that it needed the very searching test of loyalty applied to it.

If, as appears to have been the case, a settled conviction were felt by the Executive, that the province was *sound at heart*, the reduction of such conviction to a physical illustration, was clearly a work of supererogation; and, if a contrary opinion were entertained, the issue should have been equally avoided, for reasons too palpable to require explanation.

The true course of action seemed to lie in the suppression of sedition or treason, wheresoever tangible, before either should have time to manifest itself in acts of open violence, which could only be quelled at the price of popular commotion for the time being, with the contingent remainder of still more serious evils.

The elements of civil strife in Upper Canada, as compared with those of the Lower Province,

lay (and still lie) less at the core than at the surface; and not partaking of the national inveteracy with which these were surcharged, were not likely of themselves alone to lead to similar results.

Excrescences, heretofore apparent upon the social system of the province, still disfigure it; but honesty of purpose would not seek to lop them with the knife of insurrection, when their removal, as is obvious, might be effected by the persevering employment of milder means.

For these reasons, and considering the comparatively few who participated in it, it is difficult to identify Mackenzie's outbreak with the people's cause. Its object could not have been what it professed to be, the redress of grievances, or it must have proved more popular. It can only, therefore, be regarded as part and parcel of the one great political design since gradually developed, and yet in progress of development, for subverting British institutions on the North American continent, and whereof the secret ramifications doubtless extend far beyond the confines of Canada.

As qualifying, however, in some degree, the opinion thus recorded, that the outbreak of December 1837 was essentially the offspring of political machinations, rather than of irradicable intestine venom, I must also express my conviction, founded on close personal observation on the spot, that there existed and exists, on the part of all *moderate men*, in the province, an extreme sensitiveness in regard to many long-controverted points of domestic policy, out of which the semblance of insurrection, ostensibly to effect their solution, may at any time be created by designing individuals intent on the promotion of their own objects. Hence, then, the extreme danger of not at once foreclosing all outstanding questions at issue: in regard to which, I have no hesitation in declaring as my conscientious belief that, if there be one string of the whole instrument more susceptible than another of being attuned to the note of mischief, a partial, or an indefinitely deferred settlement of the clergy reserves' difficulty, will prove such.

Incidental references to this latter subject will be found in other parts of the present work.

But, though seeking an opportunity to raise the standard of rebellion, whereof the ready handle should be the redress of grievances, it admits of very serious question, whether the revolutionary faction, headed by Mackenzie, *could* have found one, had a *preventive* and *precautionary*, rather than a *chastening*, course of policy been pursued by the government. At all events, a very strong impression pervades many well-informed minds in Canada, that Mackenzie and his followers would not have hazarded the hostilities they commenced, desirous as they were to create events which should invite co-operation from without, had not the defenceless condition of Toronto, on which they had not calculated, stimulated them to immediate action.

It is admitted on all hands, that had Mackenzie displayed the same degree of courage in conducting, as he had shewn boldness in conceiving the enterprise on which he entered, Toronto must inevitably have fallen into his hands, and the province, consequently, have submitted to his dictation; because all after-opposition would have been over-awed by the *hordes* of Ameri-

cans who, in this case, would have assuredly rushed to his support.

On this hypothesis, a false appearance would have been given to the outbreak, baffling all attempts to define its real character; since, in addition to the whole body of the provincial malcontents themselves, numbers, howsoever adverse to the new state of things, would have nevertheless adhered to the triumphant party, under the influence either of timidity or interest. In a word, the whole destinies of Upper Canada would have been reversed by the capture of Toronto; and, *avowedly*, it was the result of the merest chance, and not of tact or foresight, on the part of the Executive, that a catastrophe was averted, which *need never have been risked.*

After fortunately losing, by vacillation and delay, the advantages which, unfortunately, they might easily have acquired by vigour, the insurgents became at once panic-stricken and dispirited; scattering, like sheep, after a brief show of resistance, on the approach of their antagonists, or yielding themselves passively into their hands.

Yet it was by such men that the lasting mischief, before adverted to, *might* readily have been committed!

I have been told by eye-witnesses that the battle of Gallows' Hill, as the running fight on Youge Street is termed, combined in an eminent degree the painful with the ludicrous, and was replete with associations of the most anomalous description.

Pending these occurrences, extending over some continuous days, Toronto is said to have been subjected to the greatest privations for the want of general provisions, the country people being deterred from bringing their produce to market, in their uncertainty as to whether it were safe to do so. Tea appears to have been the chief sustenance of the inhabitants in this emergency; and those families which were known to have by them small edible stores, were importuned by others, less fortunate, for a share of them. An acquaintance of my own informed me that, by dint of hard begging, he obtained from one party a joint of meat, from another a loaf of bread, and from a third some other

article; which several contributions to his necessities he could not, after all, entirely monopolize.

Though foiled in his immediate object, Mackenzie effectually attained his *ulterior* one, by inducing an aspect of affairs, which, while creating a false sympathy on the part of the American citizens at large, furnished a reckless portion of them with a specious pretext for hastening to the relief of an apparently oppressed people, amongst whom an *openly* precarious and unsettled state of things was *now* induced.

The shock imparted to the whole social fabric in Upper Canada, by Mackenzie's outbreak, had not subsided when the aid of the loyal inhabitants was invoked to repel the foreign invasions it had engendered. How nobly they responded to the call, and how well they performed their duty, are too much matters of history to require that I should do more than advert to them as connecting links in my narrative.

It is difficult to conceive that the majority of the people believed that the economical reforms they needed and desired, were unattainable, save

through the process of a change of political institutions, when on two several occasions they are seen voluntarily strangling the opportunities incidently afforded them of remodelling their condition according to their alleged wishes.

The invasion of Navy Island by a body of men, chiefly American citizens, armed and equiped in the United States, followed by the cutting out and destruction of the American steam-boat "Caroline," and the wanton attack made on the little town of Amherstburg by the notorious Theller, which ended in the capture of himself and his vessel, formed the next series of exciting political occurrences that happened, and that while producing the greatest irritation along the two opposite lines of frontier, laid the foundation of the harassing system of border outrage by Americans, which has since been periodically pursued.

During the occupancy of the island by the invaders, the usual monotony of Kingston was somewhat enlivened by the passage through it of such troops as could now be spared from

Lower Canada, to assist in the operations going on at Chippewa, for the dislodgment of the enemy from his position.

This consummation, however, when effected, left but little respite or repose, since, towards the end of February and beginning of March, a series of invasions took place, on various parts of the whole line of frontier, extending from Michigan to Vermont. These invasions intended, but failing to be simultaneously operative on the 22d of February, in commemoration of the birth-day of Washington, who, had he been alive, must have blushed for such a mode of celebration, commenced prematurely at Potton and other places on the frontiers of the eastern townships in Lower Canada, and were continued on the day in question, at Hickory Island, a few miles below Kingston; at Point Abino, near Fort Erie and the western locks of the Welland canal, a few days afterwards; at Fighting, or Turkey Island, a narrow slip of land between Sandwich and Amherstburg, on the 25th of February; and at Point-au-Pêlé Island, in Lake Erie, on the 2d of March.

The whole of these nefarious enterprises were successfully repelled; but, unfortunately, on the last occasion, not without a lamentable sacrifice on the part of the British, no less than thirty, out of about one hundred men, of the gallant 32d Regiment, who charged and defeated about five times their number, being put *hors de combat* by a murderous fire of riflery from their antagonists, who were sheltered behind a breast-work, formed of accumulated snow and ice.

To the credit of the Upper Canadians be it said, a liberal subscription was got up at Toronto for the wounded soldiers who survived this disaster, and the majority of whom were maimed for life.

I shall not easily forget the dismay which prevailed amongst the Kingstonians, when news arrived that a body of from four hundred to five hundred marauders had encamped on Hickory Island, nearly opposite Gananoque, and were to march that night on Kingston, where they expected to be joined by a body of malcontents, from the heart of a partially disaffected township,

a few miles off; and that, in the event of success crowning the undertaking, the town was to be given up to plunder, and every enormity committed.

Plate, money, jewels, and other valuables, together with the specie belonging to the local bank, were hastily collected, and lodged, for greater security, in the fort. A town-guard, embodying every man capable of bearing arms (as far as the supply of the latter would admit), was hastily enrolled; the little garrison of the fort reinforced; the town barrack, wherein some militia were quartered, doubly guarded; and, in fine, every precaution taken that the shortness of the time rendered practicable; succour being furthermore solicited from the environs.

As night approached, the general anxiety became very great, and anticipation was excited to the uttermost by the propagation of surmises and reports, regarding the progress of the enemy's movements.

Comparing small things with great, the scene and preparation might possibly have borne some analogy with what is represented to have taken

place at Bruxelles on the eve of the battle of Waterloo, when the French were reported to be within a few hours' march.

To know friends from enemies in the confusion of a nocturnal conflict, the defenders of the town were enjoined to bind round their caps, as a badge of recognition, a strip of white linen. Candour compels me to add, without the least disparagement to the valour of any, that in many cases the adornment appeared to be superfluous; since the paleness of the lengthened visages beneath it would have fairly borne the palm from the whitest linen that was ever bleached.

I know not how far this remark might have been exemplified in my own individuality, but I had at least a sort of right to look woe-begone, inasmuch as my only weapon of defence or offence was a half-rusty sabre, alike guiltless of edge, point, or sheath (I believe it had a handle), which was all I had been able to secure in the general scramble which took place for arms.

Perambulating the town in the course of the evening, I fell in with a gentleman of my acquaintance, who, armed to the teeth, was hurry-

ing to his quarters to prepare, he said, *for action*, since positive information had just been received by the commandant, that the redoubted enemy was actually on his march, and would reach Kingston by eleven o'clock at latest.

This was sufficiently *precise*, even for a non-alarmist, which I professed to be; so, leaving the streets to their solitude, I returned to my abode, there to await patiently the issue of events.

Eleven o'clock came—twelve—one—but still no enemy made his appearance; whereupon, becoming drowsy, I gave up watching, and, regardless of what might happen, lay down to rest, though without disrobing, or parting with my *trusty* sword.

My readers will here naturally conclude that my repose was of short duration, and that I have yet in store for them the description of a stirring scene of strife. But no such thing. Unbroken were my slumbers throughout the night; and on awaking the next morning it was to learn, not that an attack had been made and foiled, but that the enemy had effectually belied the reports of the previous evening, by decamp-

ing from Hickory Island without even attempting an invasion of the main-land, on ascertaining the measures which had been taken to give him a warm reception, as well at Gananoque as at Kingston.

That mischief was averted by the show of preparation made, cannot reasonably be doubted; but it is no less certain that the means of aggression of the marauders had been greatly exaggerated, though it was satisfactorily established that they had confederates within the town, which had, furthermore, recently been entered by persons from the back country, under very suspicious circumstances.

It is probable that the enemy calculated on surprising and firing the town, with the view to plunder it; in which case, in the midst of the confusion, he might have succeeded in carrying off his booty. But he could have scarcely hoped to maintain himself in his position without first making himself master of Fort Henry, a task of no slight difficulty. It was, indeed, said that defection reigned among its garrison, consisting chiefly of militia; but this, appearing to rest

rather on surmise than proof, obtained but little credit.

A few stragglers, together with some travellers who had been detained by the marauders, when on their way across the ice, were found upon the island by a detachment sent from Gananoque to explore it at break of day ; and a very amusing account of the incidents attending their captivity, was given by one of the travellers in question, a gentleman of much intelligence and respectability.

It appeared from his statement, that the effective force at the disposal of *General* Van Ranselaaer, who commanded the party, had been at first tolerably respectable in point of numbers, but that his men, over whom he had no control, gradually dwindled off as the time for active operations approached, leaving him, at last, with barely a hundred followers.

He observed that Van Ranselaaer's arms and accoutrements were very rich, and that he played the general to perfection. Both he and his companions were very civilly treated by their captors, whose sole object in detaining them was to prevent their giving information.

In the course of the day, a host of hardy fellows poured into Kingston from the surrounding country, offering their services as volunteers to defend the place; but their aid being now unnecessary, they returned to their homes after being regaled by the townspeople.

Among them were some Indians, not, however, such as my readers may imagine, with tomahawk in hand, half-naked bedaubed bodies, and painted faces, but armed with rifles, comfortably clad, and as orderly in their demeanour and appearance as any of their white comrades.

One grey-haired old warrior, with whom I broached a conversation, shrewdly remarked: "White man fall out—then send for poor Indian, whom he call dog, to help him! What for you fight? Why you not agree and be friend?" I could not but feel the keen reproach conveyed in the first part of his speech, but explained to him, with reference to the latter, that his old enemies, the Long knives,* wished to get possession of the country, and had therefore leagued

* The designation given by the Indians to the Americans.

with the disaffected in it to overturn the government; and that, as in the event of their success, the condition of his own people would be much impaired, he had a more direct interest than he seemed to imagine in coming forward in the way he had.

He said he had not before thought of that, but would consider my "words," and it was quite evident from his manner, that he now viewed the matter in a new light. We parted the best friends imaginable, but he could with difficulty be induced to accept the piece of silver coin which I proffered to him in testimony of my regard.

The summary herein-before given of the notable Hickory Island affair, will serve as a striking specimen of the very harassing life to which the border Canadians have been subjected for a lengthened period, and it is this consideration which has mainly induced me to place on record the minute details of the occurrence.

Subsequently thereto, nothing further (excepting the assumption of the government, by Sir George Arthur, and the departure of Sir Francis

Head, on the 23d of March,) of a political nature transpired during the winter, and on the opening of the navigation towards the middle of April, the danger was no longer imminent, as the facilities for crossing were diminished, though threats of further aggression continued to be held out: nor were they uttered in vain.

On the night of the 30th of May, a body of armed ruffians, from the American shore, forcibly seized and burned to the water's edge, the British steam-boat *Sir Robert Peel*, whilst that vessel was taking in fuel at an island of the St. Lawrence, lying within the jurisdiction of the Republic. Before consummating their outrage, they well pillaged both the boat and passengers, subjecting the latter, among whom were several highly respectable females, to the most cruel treatment, by leaving them exposed to the keen night air, with scarcely any covering or shelter, on the barren island where they were turned adrift. Fortunately for them, they were rescued from their painful situation early the next morning, by an American steamer, whose captain kindly diverged from his course to carry them over to Kingston.

For this wanton outrage, committed avowedly in a spirit of revenge for the destruction of the steam-boat *Caroline*, and forming, assuredly, part and parcel of a systematic crusade by American citizens against the peace and liberties of Canada, no redress, as far as I am aware, has yet been afforded to the sufferers by the American government, or demanded of it on their behalf, by the Government of Great Britain, notwithstanding their repeated urgent solicitations to the latter to such effect.

This just and reasonable demand for reparation has hitherto been met by the British Government with the evasion, that the aggressors must first be sued in the courts of the United States by the parties interested; and a demand made upon the United States' government, in the event only of justice being by this means unobtainable.

The farce of the mode of procedure suggested is so palpable, that the applicants will not adopt it; for well they know the impossibility of insuring the identification of the marauders (all of whom wore masks on the occasion); while

they are no less sensible that, even were they identified, no practical result could follow, so long as the sympathies of American judges, lawyers, and jurors, be enlisted, as notoriously they are, with the popular will, against the least reparation being made for losses sustained by the Canadians in presuming to resist its practical operation.

Towards the end of 1839, when I left Canada, this matter remained unadjusted; and there seemed but little prospect of any efficient measures being taken to ensure redress. The delay bears heavily on the sufferers, whose united claims are said to amount to upwards of £17,000; whereof about three-fourths would accrue to the owners of the vessel and the remainder to the passengers.

This occurrence preceded, only by a few days, a fresh invasion of the province, as well on the Niagara as on the extreme Western frontier opposite to Detroit; the former being known as the affair of the Short Hills, from a ridge of sand-banks so called situate in the Niagara district.

At first, this invasion threatened to prove formidable; less, however, as usual, from the

number of the invaders than because of a transient success which they obtained in capturing a small body of provincial cavalry, which they surprised in quarters, and compelled to surrender by firing the building.

But, fortunately, before they had time to profit by the panic they had created, so as to gather round their standard any considerable number of recruits—the only thing which can render invasions of this sort truly formidable—they were themselves surprised and dispersed into the surrounding swamps by a small detachment of troops hastily collected. Several, among whom was Moreau, or Morow, their leader, were subsequently tracked and brought in by the Indians of the neighbourhood, who needed but little incitement to undertake the duty.

Morow was tried and executed shortly afterwards; the sheriff of the district being within an ace of having personally to perform, if not actually performing, the loathsome duties of an executioner.*

* I speak from memory alone as to the *precise* result; but at any rate, the utmost difficulty was experienced in procuring a hangman.

The lives of the remaining culprits were spared; the worst amongst them undergoing the commuted punishment of transportation.

According to official statements, the aggregate number of persons *accused* of participation in the insurrection, or of treasonable offences, between the 5th of December 1837 and the 1st of November 1838, was 885; of whom 824 were arrested, and 61 absconded.

The number of individuals convicted by the tribunals amounted to 216, whose after position was as under:—

Pardoned, on furnishing security for future good behaviour	140
Confined in the Provincial Penitentiary	14
Banished from the provinces	18
Sentenced to transportation	27
Escaped from confinement	14
Executed*	3
Total	216

Late in May, the Earl of Durham arrived at Quebec, to assume the arduous duties of the mission he had undertaken; and the occurrences herein-before detailed were not, certainly, of a

* Lount, Mathews, Morow.

nature calculated to impress his Lordship with the notion that his path would be a smooth one. Early in July, he proceeded on a tour of inspection to the Upper Province, where he was received with every outward demonstration of honour and respect by all classes of the community, whose conjoint homage was influenced by as many different motives as there were points of party difference betwixt them; and thus, whilst there was much seeming unanimity displayed, there existed, in effect, but little real concord. But one good end, at least, was answered; that in speculations for the future, party differences were for the moment laid aside, to be revived with increased bitterness, or permanently allayed, in proportion to the wisdom of the after measures that should be adopted.

Passing over the brief interval of Lord Durham's administration of the general government, I come to the period when the abrupt termination of his Lordship's mission, resulting from the factious proceedings which took place in the British Parliament, respecting his ordinances, occasioned a general consternation in the public

mind, serving as the reaction of the hopes and expectations which had previously been raised.

To this was speedily superadded a vague and undefinable apprehension of impending danger, springing from the promulgation of reports that a most extensive conspiracy for a fresh invasion of Canada had long been secretly maturing in the United States, and was now about to exhibit itself in its effects.

I do not say, because I do not believe, that the abrupt termination of the Earl of Durham's administration was the cause, (beyond, perhaps, somewhat precipitating them,) of the melancholy events which so soon followed it; but I can state, from positive knowledge, that the general depression which took place at this critical juncture, consequent on Lord Durham's virtual recall, amounting, in fact, to a sort of stupor, and hopelessness of further effort at resistance, was produced as much, nay more, by the obvious sacrifice of Canadian interests to mere party-feeling in England, as by the contemplation of the threatened perils themselves.

An association of evils, part known, part sur-

mised, weighed down the mind of the community at large, and inspired it temporarily with a doubt of the efficiency of the means available to meet the crisis, or to repel aggression; while the very character of the terror, which seemed to have stricken all indiscriminately, added greatly to its effect.

There was, besides, a general feeling of dissatisfaction prevailing on the part of the provincial militia, in consequence of the difficulty they had experienced, during the previous troubles, in procuring an adjustment of their claims upon the Government; mainly from the circumstance of no deviation being allowed from rules adapted only to an ordinary state of things, in the conduct of the business of the public service, when the peculiar emergence imperatively required that special arrangements should be made to meet it.

This dissatisfaction of the militia, which exhibited itself in a sort of sullen apathy, was productive at one time of much serious apprehension, less, however, because it was believed that they would shrink from the threatened danger when it

should positively face them, than that their apparent lukewarmness might cause them to be taken unawares, and so entail upon the country the most serious consequences, if the hostile hordes, who threatened it from without, could any where make a stand for a sufficient period to rally round them the provincial malcontents.

But, fortunately, between the utterance and the execution of the threat of invasion, a sufficient interval elapsed to admit of reflection; and when it was rightly understood that a gratuitous invasion of the province, resulting from no insurrection in it, concealed an indiscriminate crusade against life and property, despondency gave way to indignation on the part of all, save those who were incurably disaffected towards British connexion, or who possessed nothing whereof to be despoiled.

The test now applied was of a personal rather than, as before, of a political kind, since, under the plausible pretext of the regeneration of Canada, it was apparent that an indiscriminate plunder of Canadians was contemplated; and in cases where the feeling of loyalty was doubtful,

it needed a no less powerful incentive than self-interest to rouse to action men who were labouring under a sense of real or imaginary grievances, as regarded points of local controversy, and who might, therefore, have remained passively indifferent, had they not been at length fairly awakened to the real designs of their rapacious neighbours.

Though much mystification prevailed regarding the conspiracy against Canada, termed the Hunters' Association, sufficient of it was known, through the voluntary depositions of individuals, and through the emissaries employed by the Canadian government, to satisfy the most incredulous, that its ramifications were very tortuous and extensive, that its resources were very great, and that it enrolled amongst its members many influential and official persons in the republic. It was even asserted, that military officers high in command in the United States' army, stationed on the northern frontier, were something more than friendly to the "patriot" cause, and, while seeking to preserve appearances, were desirous to make their construction of their public

duty dovetail as much as possible with their secret views. Of one, it was reported to have been declared at a "Hunters' Meeting," held at Lockport, that he was not to be feared by the "patriots," who, if they had no greater enemy than he, would get on well enough; while, of another, it was confidently stated, that he had offered to take the command of the "patriot" force, and march with it into Canada, provided that he were first assured of the services of a certain number of men, on whom he might rely at the fitting moment, and of a certain amount in money. I was myself assured, by more than one individual of respectability, while travelling in the summer of last year through the state of New York, that no moral doubt existed in the minds of the border community, that what is above stated respecting the two officers in question, was substantially correct; my informants themselves fairly ridiculing the credulity of those who might think otherwise.

Affirmations were made on oath by various parties, that the whole number of American citizens enrolled in this unholy league amounted

to no less than 200,000, of whom from 25,000 to 40,000 effective men, including a corps of 600 Kentucky riflemen, and a body of Indians, had pledged themselves to march upon the province, whensoever required. But, judging by results, allowance must be made for error or exaggerations in this statement, since in no case of actual invasion did the ascertained number of individuals exceed 400 or 500 men; though, on the other hand, it must be considered that these were sent forward as a sort of advanced guard, to try what number of Canadians would be disposed to join them when once landed in the province, and that thousands were in readiness on the opposite shore, to follow them across the river, should success attend their first efforts.

By the majority of those concerned in it, there can be no doubt that this scheme of wholesale invasion, was held to be infallible; while large sums having been actually embarked in it, as a profitable investment, the result was watched with intense anxiety, such only as Americans intent on gain are capable of feeling.

From facts which afterwards transpired, so

sanguine would many seem to have been of a favourable issue to the enterprise, that the father of one man who had enlisted as a recruit, but was afterwards prevented, by illness or some other cause, from marching when required, actually took his place, rather than his son should forego the advantages anticipated to accrue to him from the expedition. That much delusion was practised on the credulous and inexperienced; that many plunged *tête baissée* into the scheme without the least reflection, or misled by a false enthusiasm; and that the confederates in the States and the disaffected in Canada were unconsciously deceiving one another, by erroneous estimates and misplaced reliances, as the time of action approached, cannot very well be doubted, even if proof had not been afforded that, to an extent, such was in reality the case.

Among the more prominent measures of the conspirators, were the formal appointment of officers to command their army; the nomination of a president and a vice-president for the proposed Canadian republic; and the promulgation of the prospectus of an embryo bank, the pro-

jected capital whereof, fixed at 7,500,000 dollars, or £1,687,500 sterling, was to be exclusively employed in effecting the conquest of Canada, and reimbursed by the confiscation of Canadian lands, the holder of so much stock, being entitled to its estimated equivalent in land.

The general proceedings of the association were not conducted with so much secrecy, notwithstanding an affectation of masonic mystification, but that they occasionally transpired; and the following sketch, derived from authentic sources, will serve to show the mode of initiating persons to the different degrees of membership of the lodges, into which, as in masonry, the association was divided, and also the nature of the so-admitted Hunter's obligation.

Persons about to be initiated as members were introduced into the lodge blind-folded; on which the following oath was administered to them :— "You swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that you will not reveal the secret sign of the snow-shoe to any, not even to the members of the society. You will not write, print, mark, engrave, scratch, chalk, or in any conceivable man-

ner whatsoever, make the shape or sign of the snow-shoe to any living being, not even to the members of this society. You, furthermore, solemnly swear that you will not reveal any of the secrets of this society, which may come to your knowledge, through the president, vice-president, or his cabinet. You, furthermore, solemnly swear that you will give timely notice to any member or brother, if you know of any evil, plot, or design, that has been carried on against him or the society. You, furthermore, solemnly swear that you will render all assistance in your power, without injuring yourself or family, to any brother or member of this society, who shall at any time make the sign of distress to you. You, furthermore, solemnly swear that you will attend every meeting of your lodge, if you can do so without injury to yourself or family. This you swear, as you shall answer to God."

The first degree was called the "Snow-shoe" degree, and had four signs. The test made use of, upon which most reliance was placed, in case a stranger should become acquainted with any of

the signs, was that of membership, or the snow-shoe. Should all other questions have been satisfactorily answered, the person under examination was asked if he had ever seen a snow-shoe, and required to make such sign upon paper. If he attempted to make any representation of it, he was immediately known not to be a member; since, as above stated, all were sworn not to make that sign.

The first of the signs used in communication, was to lay the palm of the left hand over the back of the right, with the fingers of both hands extended and apart from each other, and then to let both hands fallcarelessly in front of the body.

The second sign in the snow-shoe degree was used in shaking hands, when the parties took the cuff of each other's coat between the finger and thumb. The third sign consisted in the inquiry—"Are you a Hunter?" The answer was the name of the day succeeding the day of the week on which the question might be asked. The fourth sign was lifting the right-hand to the ear, with the palm in front, and pressing the ear slightly forward.

The signs were answered by the same sign, or by any of the signs.

The second degree was called the "Beaver" degree; the oath pertaining thereto being—"You swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that you will not reveal the sign of the beaver degree to any one who is not a member of the same degree with yourself." The sign of this degree was as follows: "Do you know the beaver to be an industrious animal?" No answer was made verbally, but the left hand was lifted to the mouth —the palm nearest the face; the fingers were bent, the fore-finger being placed under the chin, and the nail of the thumb between the front teeth, which were closed upon it, to imitate the action of a beaver gnawing a tree.

The third degree was called the "Master Hunter's" degree: the oath belonging to it was similar to that last-mentioned. The sign was the interrogation — "Trouble?" and the answer thereto, "Calm:" the right-hand being at the same time moved from the right to the left side of the body, the back of the hand upwards, and the fingers and hand horizontal.

The fourth degree was called the "Patriot Hunter" degree: the oath was similar to that preceding. There were three signs belonging to it; the first of which was comprised in the question—"Do you snuff *and* chew?" The answer was—"I do." At the same time, if the party questioned had a snuff-box about him, he took it out, and made upon it three scratches with his nail; but if he had no such article, he put the thumb of his left-hand into the left pocket of his waistcoat, and made three scratches with the finger-nail upon the waistcoat. The second sign was—"Have you any news for me?" Answer —"Some." The third sign of this degree was the sign of distress. The left-hand was raised, with the palm forward; the fingers extended, but not apart; the thumb pointing to the coat-collar.

There was a method of gaining admission to the lodge, exclusive of all these signs. You went to the door and gave two raps on the outside, which were answered by two on the inside. You then gave one rap on the outside, which was an-

swered by one on the inside. You then made three scratches on the outside, and were thereupon admitted.

The first, or "Snow-shoe" degree, was intended to be universal in the "army" of the self-styled "patriots:" the privates took this degree; the commissioned officers, two degrees; the field-officers, three degrees; the commanders-in-chief, four or more degrees. The members of the society, whether enlisted or not, always took four degrees; but they were only to use the first degree in the army, if they enlisted.

The object of the society was stated after the party initiated had taken the fourth degree, as also some of the plans and operations; but the whole was not communicated except to the grand masters, commanders-in-chief, and others, in whom implicit confidence was reposed. The general object of the society or association was stated to be, "the emancipation of the British colonies from British thraldom."

The Hunters' signs, as above described, having been more or less divulged during the winter of

1838, underwent some changes in the course of the year following, when a fresh invasion of Canada was in agitation.

The sign of recognition in the States was now stated to be, the moving of the index-finger of the right-hand with a circular motion, acknowledged by waving the left-hand. In Canada, the same object was effected by one party putting either of his hands into his pocket, taking therefrom some change, and saying, "times are easier;" the answer being, "truly."

In 1839, when a person was initiated into a lodge, he beheld, after the removal of the bandage from his eyes, a man, having before him on a table, either a dagger or a pistol, and was told that such weapon was intended to remind him of the manner of his death, should he reveal any secret to the injury of the cause he had espoused, or of a brother. In 1838, the same weapons were also laid upon the table, on similar occasions; but nothing was then said respecting them, unless the party was initiated as a "Patriot Mason," or "Beaver Hunter."

It was indeed said, that several persons had

been secretly disposed of, for divulging the secrets of the association, or giving information respecting its proceedings.

The judicious military arrangements made by the high military authorities, must alone be considered, humanly speaking, as having saved Canada at this crisis of its fate. Public confidence, before so completely shaken, as to the efficacy of the utmost means of resistance available, was thenceforth in some degree restored; and the general gloom which had threatened to resolve itself into a settled despondency, was gradually dispelled.

It would be no easy task to describe the sensation produced throughout the province, but more especially at Toronto (where I was then residing), by the news of the descent made near Prescott by a body of armed Americans on the 12th of November. Indignation, however, was the dominant feeling on the part of all, save the incurably disaffected, and these were deterred from any open manifestation of their satisfaction, by the uncertainty if they yet possessed sufficient cause for rejoicing.

With the military proceedings incident to this invasion, I do not propose to detain my readers, further, than to observe, that the victory of the British over their opponents, was purchased, considering the numerical superiority of the former, at a very undue rate, the total loss in killed and wounded amounting to no less than four officers, and about forty-five rank and file.

The whole number of invaders did not probably exceed at the utmost 250 men, of whom, according to official statements, 157 were captured, and about fifty-six killed; the remainder being unaccounted for, and having probably contrived to recross the river before the means of retreat were entirely cut off.

As shewing the spirit by which, in despite of their still lingering discontent, the Canadian militia engaged on this occasion were animated, I may state, on the authority of an officer who was present, that one man, rushing from the ranks, and singling out an antagonist, plunged his bayonet into him, exclaiming, as he did so, "You ——— scoundrel, you wanted to rob me of my farm, did you? There; take that instead."

So great, indeed, was the exasperation of the militia, that it is averred they were with difficulty induced to make any prisoners at all; while it is possible, that, but for the example of forbearance set them by the regulars, who had not the same cause of provocation as themselves, much after trouble would have been saved to the provincial executive.

While the contest was going on, repeated attempts were made to throw over reinforcements from the American side, but the presence of an armed British steam-boat in the river frustrated every attempt of this kind, and compelled the adventurers to retreat with loss.

The American authorites made, as usual, when too late to be of service, a show of active interference to thwart the operations of the invaders, and of course effected nothing; while the populace of Ogdensburg, lining the shore, rent the air with their shouts and acclamations of encouragement to the unhappy beings who had periled their lives in this desperate undertaking, and who would doubtless not have ventured on it, had they supposed they should be left unsupported.

Waggon-loads of men who were ready to take part in the affray, came pouring into Ogdensburg from all parts of the adjacent country, and these individuals were frantic with rage, in common with the townspeople at large, at the obstacles which prevented them from affording succour to their countrymen.

Very different, it is obvious, must have been the result of this expedition but for the opportune intervention of the steam-boat in question. From the uncertainty which at first prevailed respecting the projected movements of the enemy, this boat did not arrive at the scene of action in sufficient time to prevent the landing; but it effectually neutralized the after-plan of operations, and may justly be considered as the mainspring of the successful defensive measures that were taken.

Had a larger body of Americans reached the Canada shore, they must have overpowered the small militia force that merely sufficed to keep in check the actual invaders, until the arrival of detachments of regular troops from Kingston, and would in this case have probably succeeded in effecting a junction with the provincial mal-

contents in the neighbourhood, who were deterred from coming forward under the actual circumstances.

As it was, the enemy made a stout and bold resistance, worthy, according to all accounts, of a better cause, though disgracing himself in other respects by some revolting acts of cruelty; and he was only dislodged from the strong stone-mill and houses in which he had taken up his position, by the play of some heavy pieces of ordnance; after a few salutations from which he was forced to surrender at discretion.

The public mind had not had time to recover from the excitement which this event produced, when it was further agitated by a fresh invasion which took place at Moy, near Windsor, on the western frontier, on the 4th December following.

The well-affected part of the community were beginning however, by this time, to have the fullest confidence in themselves and their resources; and, inspired with the late success at Prescott, they did not doubt a similar result at Windsor.

On this occasion the invaders were encountered by the militia alone, and dispersed after a running fight, in which they sustained a heavy, and their pursuers a trivial, loss in killed and wounded. Subsequently, about fifty prisoners fell into the hands of the victors, who in the excitement of the moment, shot four or five of them on the spot. Nor was this extraordinary, however contrary to the usages of civilized warfare and the dictates of humanity, considering the extreme degree of resentment kindled in the militia by the enormities which had signalized the landing of the marauders. They commenced operations by setting fire to a steam-boat, and to a guard-house, in which a small picquet which they surprised was stationed, burning in it one or two of its defenders; murdered, without the slightest cause or provocation, a staff surgeon of the regular forces, afterwards mutilating his body in a way too horrible to mention; and slew an inoffensive coloured man, simply because he declined to join them. A claim of 4,500*l.* has been made as indemnity for the destruction of the steam-boat above alluded to, but the case

has apparently been left in the same position as that of the *Sir Robert Peel.*

The number of the invading force was estimated at about four hundred men, the greater part of whom having the means of conveyance at their disposal, succeeded, after their dispersion, in making good their retreat into the United States' territory; their egress from which had, as at Prescott, either been connived at or ineffectually resisted. It is but justice, however, to state, that the American military officer commanding on the station prevented, at the risk of his popularity, reinforcements from being thrown across, by cruizing between the two shores in an armed steam-boat.

The same enthusiasm for the success of the hostile incursion that had been manifested at Ogdensburg, also displayed itself at Detroit, where thousands were assembled to cheer on the adventurers.

This was the last enterprize of the kind attempted; its failure following so close upon the defeat at Prescott, and combined with apprehensions respecting the fate of the prisoners

taken on both occasions, sufficed to suspend further hostile demonstrations on the part of the conspirators in the States, who now accused the partizans in Canada, on whose co-operation they had relied, of pusillanimity, and an abject submission to the yoke from which they professed a desire to free themselves.

The trials of the captives were the all-absorbing topic which engaged public attention for some time afterwards. The majority were condemned to death by the militia general courts-martial, before which they were arraigned; such sentence being carried into effect in the cases of seventeen individuals; eleven of whom were the leading actors in the affair at Prescott, and six in that at Windsor.

These executions, though unquestionably both necessary and justifiable, were considered by many to have been far too long protracted; the first, that of Von Schoultz, having taken place on the 8th of December, and the last not before the close of February. The end contemplated, of striking a timely salutary terror, would pro-

bably have been more effectually attained, had the infliction of the punishment more quickly followed the commission of the offence; by which means also, the indefinite repetition of a revolting spectacle would have been avoided.

The convicts whose lives were spared were not finally disposed of until some time afterwards. A considerable number of those, whose youth and inexperience pleaded in extenuation of their guilt, were pardoned, and set at liberty on the United States' territory in the course of the ensuing summer. Though much objected to in Canada, their liberation gave rise to considerable satisfaction in the United States; but despite of the assurances of gratitude put forth, it seemed after all to be there viewed, save by the parties themselves, and the respectable portion of the press, less as a boon than as a right which had been conceded. Nevertheless, the measure must be considered a very judicious one, and to have been dictated by a sound policy.

The remaining prisoners who could prefer no claim to similar clemency, had their original sen-

tences commuted to transportation, and were conveyed to Van Diemen's Land direct from Quebec, in company with a batch of convicts from Lower Canada, on board the Queen's ship *Buffalo*, in the month of October last.

The subjoined statement, compiled from official documents, shews the whole number of individuals captured in the various attempts to invade Upper Canada, during the winters of 1837-38, and 1838-39, together with the manner of their disposal:—

Acquitted by the several Courts*	6
Pardoned on various grounds	90
Discharged from various causes	21
Died in the Hospital	2
Executed	17
Transported	78
Remained in confinement towards the end of 1839	6
Total	220

The year 1839, though not marked, as had been the two preceding years, by any actual invasion of the Canadian provinces, was nevertheless fertile as well of political agitation, as of

* Including the self-styled General Sutherland, whose conviction was held to be invalid by the law officers of the Crown in England.

indications that the least relaxation of precautionary defensive measures on the part of the Canadian authorities and people, would entail at any moment upon the country a renewal of past calamities. Indeed, such was the feverish state of anxiety which general appearances induced during the greater part of the year, that the anticipation of some hidden danger being on the eve of explosion was continually uppermost.

Awaiting time and opportunity for attempting greater undertakings, the executive of the *Hunters' Association* would seem to have decreed a systematic crusade against life and property, wheresoever these might be assailable with impunity along the Canadian line of frontier. On the Niagara frontier in particular, this species of molestation was carried to the greatest excess, midnight incendiarism, robbery, and attempts to murder, being there of constant occurrence.

In the early part of the preceding winter, a gentleman named Usher, living in that district, was barbarously assassinated in his own house, under very atrocious circumstances. An Ameri-

can citizen, named Lett, has publicly avowed himself in various of the American border towns to be the perpetrator of the deed; boasting of it as a meritorious act, and declaring that he received for it a pecuniary consideration. No steps, however, to arrest this ruffian were taken by the United States' authorities, who uniformly turned a deaf ear to the applications made to them by the provincial government, to cause him to be brought to justice either in the one country or the other.

Lett further stands accused of leading participation in the conspiracy discovered at Cobourg in August last, the object of which was the murder of a selected number of individuals, and the plunder of the local bank. The majority of the desperadoes implicated proved to be American citizens, who had lately crossed over from the United States, for the express purpose of acting in this atrocious business. The existence of the plot was revealed by one of their number, a man named Moon, just on the eve of its explosion, and most of the miscreants were, on his evidence, secured; ample proofs of their premeditated

guilt being, besides, found upon them, or in the house where they were captured. Lett, however, having his suspicions of Moon's sincerity, had effected his escape, and being in disguise, got back to the States in safety.

Many curious revelations are said to have been made by the prisoners, respecting the designs of the Canadian malcontents and their partisans in the States; revelations tending to criminate many notable persons in both countries, who had not before been even suspected of favouring the "patriot cause."

Earlier in the season, a trooper in a corps of local cavalry stationed at Toronto, was arrested on the strength of some papers accidentally found in his possession, proving him to be an emissary from the American side, and revealing a design on his part to take the life of the Lieutenant Governor for the sake of a pecuniary reward. It was remembered, that on various occasions he had endeavoured to get himself placed on duty as an orderly at the Government-House, and had been very particular in his inquiries as to the whereabout of the Governor's sleeping-room. To com-

plete the chain of evidence against him, there was found in his possession a minute sectional plan of the Government-House, and also of the fort and garrison at the western extremity of the town.

This worthy, as also those first mentioned, were tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

On a previous occasion, Sir George Arthur's life would seem to have been placed in jeopardy through similar agency, if a deposition may be relied on to the effect that his Excellency was aimed at with a rifle, while passing near Cobourg, on his way from the Lower Province, in October 1838, and only escaped by the weapon missing fire.

In May of this year, a very daring act was perpetrated by some marauders from the United States, in the robbery of the Upper Canada mail, between Kingston and Gananoque; the plunderers retreating with their booty, which comprised a considerable sum of money, into the territory from whence they had issued. A small portion of the money was accidentally recovered,

but redress for the injury, though the parties were well known, was unattainable; the American authorities, as in the case of Lett, not daring, or not desiring, to interfere with the working of the popular feeling against Canada.

Soon after the re-establishment of the naval command on the Lakes, which has its head-quarters at Kingston, an agreement had been entered into between the naval authorities and one of the American military officers stationed on the frontier, for the purpose of undertaking in concert such measures as should insure the preservation of neutrality. The moment, however, that any fruits were likely to result from this arrangement, the American officer was seen to back out of it, by alleging that public excitement respecting the object to which it had reference, ran too high to admit of it being operative.

In like manner, on the occasion of the mail robbery just mentioned, a similar sort of understanding having been come to between the naval authorities and another United States' officer, went on well enough, until a practical benefit

was likely to accrue from it, when its letter in lieu of its spirit was regarded, and it became a nullity.

Regarding the case of the notorious Mackenzie, we may be assured from every concurrent testimony, that his imprisonment at Rochester was the result rather of his having rendered himself personally obnoxious to various persons in the States, and of the Americans having fairly become tired of him, than of a real desire on their part to evince abhorrence of the manifold crimes wherewith he had stained himself.

But an event, originating on the British side, of a nature far more calculated to precipitate immediate hostilities between the two countries than any I have yet narrated, occurred in the course of the summer. This was the seizure at Brockville by the collector of customs, on his own authority, of the American schooner *G. S. Weeks*, which, being on her way from Oswego to Ogdensburg, had stopped at Brockville to discharge a portion of her cargo intended for that place. The ground of the seizure was, an alleged irregularity in the papers of the schooner,

respecting a piece of ordnance which appeared upon her deck, and formed part of the cargo *in transitu* for Oswego. By a rigorous interpretation of the provincial law, prohibiting the entrance into Canadian ports of foreign vessels, with arms or munitions of war on board, this seizure might have been justifiable; but under all the circumstances, and considering the ticklish state of the political relations of the two countries, it was, to say the least of it, neither a necessary nor prudent proceeding.

On the other hand, the exhibition of the gun on deck was extremely reprehensible on the part of the captain of the vessel, as tending to inflame, which, in effect, it did to the highest degree, the passions of the populace, who were still labouring under a keen sense of the nefarious invasions of the province during the preceding winter. The result was as might have been anticipated: on the collector deciding to make the seizure, the people, being now in the wildest state of excitement, boarded the vessel, forcibly possessed themselves of the gun, and paraded it with shouts of triumph through the town. The whole

difficulty might readily have been obviated in the first instance, without the slightest sacrifice of principle or honour, had the vessel been required to leave the port forthwith, with an injunction not to return to it, unless the obnoxious gun should be first left at its place of destination; whereas, the proceedings taken terminated in an abandonment of the seizure under extremely humiliating circumstances.

On learning what had occurred, Colonel Worth, of the United States' army, repaired from Oswego to Brockville, in an armed steamer, filled with soldiers, and imperatively demanded the restitution both of the vessel and the gun; intimating,—as his presence in such array sufficiently indicated,—that in case of refusal, hostilities on his part would ensue.

In this dilemma, the collector held a consultation with the civil authorities, when it appearing upon an inspection of some further papers, tardily produced by the master of the schooner, that the seizure was not so sustainable as at first appeared; while, at all events, the physical means of resistance available were inadequate to

the emergency, the resolution was adopted of acceding to Colonel Worth's demand.

To avoid the appearance of a surrender on compulsion, it was stipulated on the one hand, and subscribed to on the other, that the schooner and the gun should not be given up until the armed steam-boat had withdrawn from the British waters.

At this stage of the proceedings, a British steam-boat, also armed, and with troops on board, arrived from Kingston. Had it made its appearance sooner, there can be little doubt that lamentable consequences would have ensued, as the naval commander would have felt himself bound to enforce Colonel Worth's departure ere any terms of adjustment could be listened to, and to deny his right to interfere in a matter purely of a civil nature, without trenching on the question as to whether the seizure were legal or not.

The original agreement was happily adhered to; but it required the aid of a military force on shore to preserve order during the transit of the gun to the wharf, and its replacement on board the schooner.

It is obvious in this affair, that if, as must be perhaps, admitted, the detention of the schooner and the gun were an uncalled-for act, well deserving censure, the conduct of Colonel Worth, in attempting to enforce their restitution by an armed demonstration, was to the last degree unwarrantable; clearly depriving the United States' government of any after right of civil reclamation, even assuming it in the first instance to have possessed one.

Nevertheless it is averred, and the report rests on very good authority, that the Federal executive has had the unparalleled effrontery, as in the case of the *Caroline*, to make a formal demand for indemnity on the Government of Great Britain in relation to this matter!

But I should fill a volume were I to attempt to narrate in chronological order of detail the various border occurrences, more particularly those emanating from the American side, out of which national strife might at any moment have arisen. Apart from the Brockville affair, truth compels me to add that a few isolated acts of trivial aggression against American citizens were

committed by the Canadians, under momentarily excited feelings, or while inebriated; but in every case, where requisite, ample apology or reparation was made by the provincial authorities; while, to the lasting credit of the people in general, be it said, such was their forbearance, that no positive retaliation was attempted for the bitter wrongs they had themselves sustained and were continually sustaining.

The dreaded 4th of July, the day on which, according to secret communications and general report, another formidable irruption was to take place, passed off without any thing serious occurring; though it was pretty well established that the state of preparation exhibited by the two provinces, rather than any voluntary forbearance on the part of those who meditated aggression, was the substantial cause of the preservation of order and tranquillity. A few ebullitions of anti-British feelings displayed themselves in various parts of the country, chiefly populated with American settlers, (noted for previous disaffection,) in the exhibition of republican banners bearing treasonable devices, and

either hoisted upon poles or carried in procession; but such attempts to excite commotion were rendered innoxious through their prompt suppression by peaceful means, and the actors in them were, for the most part, fain to indemnify themselves for their disappointment in a tavern carouse.

It was pretty generally known that, up to this period, cases of musket-barrels were constantly being sent from New York *viâ* the Hudson, their ostensible destination being principally Rochester. One such cargo was seen to go off in the care of a notorious French-Canadian rebel, dwelling on the confines of Vermont, who was in the habit of issuing from thence inflammatory publications, in the French language, for circulation among his deluded countrymen.

Later in the season it transpired, through an authentic source, that an extensive purchase of ammunition for the patriot service had just been effected in the city of New York, and transmitted to the frontier, to be there in readiness for use on the first occasion. Lastly, as shewing how unchanged remained the views of at least a por-

tion of the American citizens in regard to the affairs of Canada, so late as the end of August 1839, I subjoin, in the Appendix, a copy I procured of a very curious document, emanating from an executive committee, forming a ramification of the *Honourable the Association of Hunters*, while assembled in one of the towns of the State of New York.

As regards the chief events of domestic policy or import, of which the year 1839 was pregnant, the same were ushered in with the destruction by fire, on the 6th of January, of the episcopal church at Toronto; originating, as it seemed on an investigation of the circumstances, in accident rather than design. A very valuable organ, the gift, I believe, of a private individual, was destroyed in the conflagration, which raged so fiercely as to leave nothing but the bare walls of the building standing. On the score of architecture there was little to regret in the disaster, but very serious inconvenience was occasioned to a part of the community by its occurrence. A new edifice, raised on the old foundation, has since been built by means of the joint agencies of

credit and voluntary contributions, and towards the close of the year the outer structure was well nigh completed.

The only difference between the external appearance of the old building and the new was the addition to the latter of a light steeple, which, owing to the ingenious combination of shape, a tin covering, and a crooked cross surmounting the apex, looked for all the world like a well-polished extinguisher, whereof the handle had chosen to assert its independence by forsaking its usual place.

Nevertheless, the steeple, such as it is, imparts a degree of finish to the edifice, that gives it an advantage over the episcopal church at Kingston, and the Catholic cathedral at Montreal; both of those places of worship appearing, from the absence of a spire, as though they had been decapitated.

During the early part of the year, the public mind was rife with agitation and excitement on the subject of the Clergy Reserves' question; discussions respecting which had been revived, and conducted with their usual acrimony in the

House of Assembly. So undecided appeared to be the views and principles of the whole body of provincial legislators as to the mode of effecting an adjustment of the difficulty their collective wisdom was required to solve, and so strangely blended were individual religious feeling and political bias, that parties themselves were split into minute particles, and no two members seemed to entertain for four-and-twenty hours together the same set of opinions. It was at once both distressing and amusing to witness the inconsistency which prevailed in the debates, and to compare, as I afterwards took the trouble from curiosity to do (though I will not detain my readers with the results), the various schemes successively proposed and abandoned, revived and abandoned again, with variations *ad infinitum*, for unravelling this skein, needlessly rendered an intricate one. At the very heel of the session a Government measure was introduced providing for the realization of the Reserves, and leaving the after distribution of the proceeds to the British Parliament; the same being finally carried in the Assembly by a majority of *one!*

The Bill, which was necessarily a reserved one, never became an Act; since the British Government declined to recommend its confirmation, on the ostensible ground of some informality in passing it.

Had those persons in England who, either from the institution of false analogies, or from ignorance of the peculiar *local* circumstances of the case at issue, are so clamorous in their outcry against the alienation of any portion of the Reserves in question from a purely episcopal clergy, been resident in Upper Canada at the period to which I allude, they *must* have been convinced of the fallacy of the arguments they adduce in support of their premises; and may even now become enlightened on reference to the records of the provincial legislature incident to the occasion, and, above all, to the tone and spirit of the colonial press.

To agitation on the Clergy Reserves' question, succeeded an all-absorbing interest created by the appearance of the Earl of Durham's Report on the affairs of Canada. It was, of course, favourably or unfavourably received by different

parties, according to the various degrees of their peculiar bias, self-interest, or prejudice; but, on the whole, the document in its general tenor must be said to have been one of great popularity with all, save a very exclusive class of persons.

The proceedings which took place in the provincial legislature in regard to this publication, offer a very limited criterion whereby to estimate the sentiments of the community at large; nor do they in the least militate against the foregoing conclusions, which relate exclusively to the generality of the various constituencies, and not to their representatives.

The summer and autumn were signalized by meetings in various parts of the country, for the discussion of the subject of what was termed responsible government, and a very large proportion of its advocates included men whose attachment to British connection was undoubted, and who had already made every effort to preserve it. It may be assumed, therefore, that they would not have supported the responsible system but for the sake of carrying out, by its

agency those economical reforms on which they felt the future prosperity of the country to depend.

These meetings, for the most part, went off quietly, ending in the passing of resolutions only, and would have done so in every case had not adverse feeling induced a few attempts to put them down. At an assemblage of this nature, on the Yonge Street Road, in October, the partizanship of the sheriff of the district occasioned a serious disturbance, in the confusion of which a man accidentally lost his life by falling from his waggon, the wheels of which passed over his body. Both parties, however, were to blame, but most so the "Anti-responsibles," since they went from Toronto avowedly for the purpose of driving their opponents from the ground.

It must be obvious, that, as a representative form of government *has been given* to the Canadian people, a system of responsible government, limited in its operation to purely domestic affairs, is both necessary and expedient under existing circumstances; while a disposition to

concede this privilege to an extent, has already been evinced by the home Government, as shewn by Lord John Russell's recent despatch, authorizing the removal of public functionaries in cases where their views or conduct may prove obstacles in the way of the well-working of the government.

But, apart from the consideration of the abstract question of a prescriptive right, it must be remembered that, unless the affections of the people be secured, Canada cannot be retained; and that, therefore, whatever the majority of the British population may consider conducive to their good, must, from the very necessity of the case, be yielded to them. If they be reckless, and evince a desire to sever prematurely the state of colonial connexion with England, they must, from the circumstances of their geographical position, attain their object; but if, as now, they evince a disposition to draw closer the bonds of such connexion, contingent on their reasonable demands being complied with, it is surely something worse than folly to trifle with their expressed wishes.

By the timely employment of judicious means, Great Britain *may* retain, for an indefinite period, her North American provinces, in despite of the machinations of the neighbouring Republic; but she cannot hope to do so if their British inhabitants *will* it otherwise; and their attachment being thus her mainstay, it behoves her rightly to appreciate its value.

In conclusion, it may not be irrelevant to the subject-matter to observe, that it is, perhaps, after all, a very questionable point, whether, in regard to the Canadian provinces, a representative form of government should not have been withheld, until the country were *qualified*, *cæteris paribus*, for a supreme local executive, when both might have been accorded with greater advantage than the first alone; which, practically, so far from having proved a means of promoting the qualification needed, has, in effect, by its evil working, hitherto served to thwart it.

But the gift having been conferred, cannot with safety or propriety be resumed; though as a *general principle*, we may be assured, that its

premature possession by small communities, only serves to set them by the ears, by creating in them undue pretensions to the substance of that whereof they have the shadow: for the very essence of a representative form of government being independence, is in itself *virtually* at issue with colonial relations; and hence, inherently possessing a corrosive tendency, must inevitably, *unless surrounded by efficient safeguards*, precipitate separation; which, to prove salutary, should result alone from the natural maturity of the weaker party, attained through the protective medium of the strong: since, otherwise, the former, overshooting the mark, would find itself in a position which, neither morally nor physically, it would be able to maintain.

My narrative of the chain of occurrences, political or domestic, which have the most strongly marked the history of Canada within the last few years, here terminates. I am unable to extend the record to a later period, since I left Toronto, on my return to England, very early in December; the last event of public interest I had an opportunity of witnessing being

the opening of the Provincial Legislature on the 3d of that month, by the Right Hon. C. Poulett Thomson, who had just before arrived from the Lower Province, to assume the local government.

CHAPTER V.

General Review of the Conduct of the American Authorities throughout the proceedings herein-before narrated.—Development of the Designs of the Republic on British North America.—Insidious Policy practised.—Identification of the Maine and Canada Questions, viewed in conjunction.—Revelations regarding Implied Intrigues of Russia, in fomenting disturbances in Canada.

How great soever, as in the abstract they may be, it is after all far less *inward elements of discord* that England has to fear in respect of her North American possessions, than *outward elements of aggression*, whose moral influence and physical weight, by their susceptibility of being brought at any time to bear upon the first, impart to them a quality of inherent strength which they would not otherwise possess. It is doubtful if the annals of history could furnish a parallel to the moral turpitude and the positive guilt which have marked the conduct of no inconsiderable portion of the American citizens,

in the prosecution, for a long time past, of their nefarious designs against a neighbouring people, with whom they are nominally at peace, who have done them no wrong, and whose sole offence has consisted in the rightful occupancy of a territory the possession of which is eagerly coveted by their assailants.

It matters little to those who suffer by their effects to what primary cause such measures may be ascribable,—whether they originate in political institutions of a defective character,—in unsound laws,—in a laxity of moral feeling,—in the sheer depravity of human nature,—or in all these things combined: it is not for them to care about the investigation of their nature, seeing that no remedial measures admitting of application are vested in their keeping; but it is of the utmost importance to them to be preserved from the periodical recurrence of the evils flowing from them, and not to be subjected, as in effect they are, to the extreme hardship of being continually in arms, for the defence of their lives, their property, and the sacredness of their homes.

To say that this relative position *is a consequence of a state of colonial dependence*, conveys no satisfactory answer to the complaint preferred; because, it must be first established that the bulk of the complainants, if deprived in their present weak condition by a severment of connection, of such protection as England is able to afford them, would not, in reality, *be more exposed* to the assaults of lawless rapacity than heretofore, and be equally liable to the spoliation which has already been attempted.

But, in conjunction with this view of the case, remains also to be considered the momentous question of England's impaired vitality; first, by the prostration of her dependencies by hostile hands; and, secondly, by the *future strength* of those dependencies developed by such hands, and not, as they should be, by her own, being turned against herself.

Regarding, with relation to the affairs of British North America, executive government and authority, as constituted, or, rather as practically understood in the United States, we have only to take a brief retrospect of the past to ar-

rive at the conclusion, that the conduct of the official functionaries representing such government and authority, from the affair of Navy Island to the present time, has been based on one of two latent springs of action—insincerity or impotence; if not, indeed, on an union of both.

On the first of these hypotheses,—judging by the contrast of professions with results,—the constituted authorities of the Union, whilst claiming credit for the actual employment of vigorous preventive measures, would have been throughout desirous to let the reiterated experiment of invading Canada by American citizens go on, for the purpose of insidiously effecting, without any apparent participation of their own, at a price less costly than that of war, the acquisition of an extensive territory, long forming a primary coveted object of the national ambition.

On the second hypothesis, assuming them to have been actuated by sincerity of motive, their moral power being a nullity, they would have shrunk intuitively from bringing into direct collision with the popular will, on whose breath their official existence depended, the means of

resistance *nominally* at their disposal, to control its excesses, from a conviction that the consequences would recoil very fearfully upon themselves.

Hence, the means of preventing aggression by native citizens on a friendly, unoffending power, are in reality at their disposal, or they are not. If they be, the result has shewn, during the period mentioned, that they have not efficiently employed them; while, otherwise, they have professed to exercise a power which they did not possess; and in either case must stand convicted of duplicity at the bar of nations desirous to retain the appellation of civilized communities.

In a word, we have seen the American government favouring Great Britain with the expression of its best wishes, for the preservation of neutrality, but remaining perfectly incompetent or unwilling to enforce even the semblance of such neutrality, on the part of its border citizens.

By a further parity of reasoning, the conclusion follows, that under existing circumstances, the American citizens are unsafe neighbours;

but it does not equally follow that those who have the misfortune to dwell in their vicinity are, *therefore*, to insure the preservation of their lives by the abandonment of their possessions, at the requisition of lawless rapacity and tyranny; for the admission of such a doctrine, whether as regards nations or individuals, would be at once subversive of the fundamental laws of social life.

So long as a plan for actively interfering in Canadian affairs was wanting, the citizens of the Union could not very well create one; but when from incidental circumstances—hastened, peradventure, by their own wily machinations—it is offered to them, they are seen to cling to it with a degree of tenacity which sufficiently reveals not only the pre-existence of a cherished purpose, but a feeling of deep-seated enmity to the race from which they sprung, as ungenerous as it is certainly unnatural.

The pretext eagerly sought for being furnished by the events which took place in Canada in the winter of 1837, it has been ever since the endeavour of the American citizens to keep the question open, and the public mind excited,

from a perception that it would be a task of less difficulty to preserve in being than to resuscitate, the demon of mischief, created opportunely for their purpose.

Failing, therefore, to carry into immediate effect their design of overrunning Canada, their next great object preparatory to the renewal of such a measure, would be, as in effect it has been, to prevent the country from settling down to a state of permanent tranquillity, with a view to check, save by themselves, that development of its great natural resources, by the united means of capital and labour, which, if accomplished, would prove so formidable a barrier to the accomplishment of their ambitious schemes.

After the summary suppression of the first Canadian insurrection, and the manifested attachment of the bulk of the entire British population of the two provinces to British institutions, it is not perhaps hazarding too great an assumption, that no further attempts to disturb the public peace would have been made by the disaffected within the country, had not their expiring hopes been revived by extensive aid,

promised or expected, on the part of American citizens: while here, a practical illustration is at once afforded of my preliminary remark respecting the bearing of outward influences on internal elements of discord.

In both provinces, the objects immediate and prospective of the disaffected were identical, and in both the same means to the attainment of a common end were put in requisition; but, apart from their criminality, it must be obvious, that the real motives of action of the respective parties were as dissimilar as were their creeds and their capacities.

It has been shewn that the disaffected constitute in the Lower Province the majority, and in the Upper Province the minority, of the population. The first are disaffected by nature, from habit, from ignorance, and from feeling; the latter from principle, association, and restlessness for change: but the result has proved that either body, from the superior moral energies of its counterpoise, will become positively dangerous or formidable in proportion only as it may be acted on by the influence of outward agents.

Reviewing, with reference to what precedes, the *past relations* of the United States with *Canada, in connexion* with *subsequent occurrences*, on the Maine and New Brunswick frontier,—with the *spirit* of the debates which have ensued thereon in Congress,—with the *measures* in relation thereto, that have been taken by the nominal executive,—with the *tone* pervading the American press, and, above all, with the *feeling* which seems to animate the great bulk of the community, constituting, in fact, the real government—no other conclusion can be formed in the mind of the least biassed observer, even if doubt before existed, that it is the settled purpose of the Republic to sweep, if possible, of all jurisdiction but its own, the entire continent of North America ; and that the attempt having been begun, as one means fails others will continue to be successively resorted to, either until success shall be the crowning result, or constant disaster and defeat shall prove success to be hopeless.

But let not the period when, nor the circumstances under which, the American citizens seek

to carry out this one great design, be overlooked.

They see, from the lowering aspect of affairs in other quarters, that England is in a fair way of being embroiled with one or other of her insidious enemies; they are aware that the state of European politics is such, that a spark applied at almost any point would kindle a general conflagration; and thus availing themselves of what they consider a favourable opportunity, when England is likely to have her hands full, they seek tacitly to coerce her into compliance with the most preposterous demands. In fine, just as the slippery game of European politics may fluctuate to the weal or woe of England, so will the plans of the United States in regard to her North American possessions be retarded or accelerated. They will acquire those possessions, *if possible*, without war; but, otherwise, will avert the period of such war until they can undertake it with a probability of success.

It must have been painfully obvious to every person anxious to see peace preserved between the two countries, that it was seriously en-

dangered *from the moment* when the Republicans received with honour and distinction, amounting to acclamation, the first rebel fugitives from Canada; for the application of this touchstone revealed a general state of morbid feeling most startling to behold.

The occurrences which had caused the flight of the individuals in question, were too strictly in unison with the secret views and wishes of their entertainers, for them not to determine that the ball which had been so opportunely set in motion, should be kept thenceforward rolling. No sense of honour, no sense of justice, no sense of duty towards England, would have been allowed to operate against their own interests and inclinations could they, without danger to themselves, have then thrown openly their balance as a nation into the scale.

But short of this they were prepared to go; and if, whilst amusing England with professions of good faith and moderate desires, they could only attain their cherished object by insidious means, they need care but little for the after-consequences, seeing that they would have been

well indemnified beforehand for the retribution they would have provoked.

Let any one who has pondered over late events, deny, if conscientiously he can, the reasonableness of these conclusions. Time gives to collective data an increased value to that they may possess, if considered singly at the moment of the occurrences to which they bear reference: if circumstantial evidence be sometimes permitted to hang an individual, of whose guilt no moral doubt remains, it may surely suffice to convict a community.

The attempt to win Canada by a *coup de main*, that is by revolutionizing it, through the medium of domestic malcontents, and then overrunning it by predatory hordes, having met with the signal discomfiture that it merited, the aggressors had to devise a fresh plan of operations in order to preserve their cause from languishing. Hence, such was the quickened state of the public pulse, such the morbid nature of the virus, that the contagion, raging theretofore in Ohio and Michigan, was seen at once to

transfer itself to distant Maine as though by a galvanic stroke!

Let it be borne in mind—for the fact is an important one — that the present clamour respecting the disputed territory, did not fairly commence until *after* the winter of 1838, when a second attempt to wrest Canada from Great Britain, by means other than open warfare, had been made and frustrated!

It was clearly only with reference to the *mode* of acquiring Canada that the Republicans differed; the majority of them agreed in the desirability, and united in the wish, but it required that previous endeavours should have failed, to warrant the general determination now evinced, that the broad mantle of Maine should cover the next *coup d'essai.*

In a word, it was not thought worth while to risk hostilities on the North Eastern boundary case, so long as it remained *unproven* that Canada could be won by the means actually employed.

This open question, being a peg whereon

to hang, at any convenient period, a quarrel covering a latent design, was too invaluable to be closed by an equitable adjustment. Thus the unanimous voice of the Republic demands from England the almost unqualified cession of a tract of territory the possession of which would virtually throw Canada into her lap, and intimates that the alternative of non-compliance with this exorbitant requisition shall be war! Making this the apparent ground of quarrel, the real object to foreign eyes is less apparent, and a show of self-justice is made, to sanctify an act which in effect is one of monstrous political depravity.

The very anxiety of the Republic on this point, at a junction like the present, should alone enlighten England as to the true state of the question, and teach her the real value to herself of a portion of the disputed territory, even if its geographical position did not sufficiently point it out.

Maine *is made to interpret* as it suits her purpose the treaty of 1783, and suddenly to enforce her views by an armed demonstration of

a nature to *invite* collision. She rejects contumaciously the award made by a disinterested third party, notwithstanding that it gives her very great advantages; demands more than she ever before presumed to ask; and declares that she will submit to no adjustment other than she dictates, the terms of which she knows to be inadmissible, unless upon compulsion.

Maine is, in fact, put forward to play, as though her own, the game of the whole Union, whose representative, knowing that he is uttering the sentiments of the masses which control him, exclaims, with assumed coyness, "I cannot coerce Maine from acting in her individuality if she see fit; but I am constitutionally bound to afford Maine the benefit of the federal aid if she involve herself in hostilities with a foreign power; and therefore she must be allowed to act with impunity, if peace be coveted!" Such is practically the language now held by the United States of North America towards Great Britain.

The self-same farce was enacted throughout the Canada troubles, fomented by American

agency, and maintained by American interference.

The state arsenals were pillaged — recruits raised—the Canadas invaded—without any *real* effort on the part of the American authorities to prevent either the one or the other act. But immediately those who were suffering from the excesses committed, asserted their right to retaliate upon their aggressors, they were warned "off the premises," and reminded of the obligation of the federal executive, to *protect* and defend under all and any circumstances, the citizens whom it had before been impotent to restrain. In other words, the executive could *shield* them from the penalty of their transgressions, because they *willed* that it should do so; but it could not *prevent* their misconduct, because they *forbade* its interference!

I rail not at Republicanism in the abstract because of its evil working in the United States, but I regard it as I there see it brought to bear on the welfare and interests of another people, and as prejudicially affecting that welfare and those interests from the want of a regulating

principle, which, by causing it to harmonize, as well with social as with national obligations, should ensure permanent good relations, amity, and peace.

The arguments deducible from the foregoing premises, lead to the conclusion that the American democracy being virtually the government, it is with that democracy that England has in reality to deal, and not, as is apparently the case, with a government properly so called, capable and willing of itself to act upon a fixed rule of conduct, based on principle and justice.

In considering the past and present aspect of affairs on the North American continent, there remains another cause to be adverted to, as having exercised—and as still exercising—apart from mere political considerations, a decided influence on the conduct of American citizens in regard to Canada.

I allude to a subject which I have not before seen mooted, but which very forcibly impressed itself upon my mind during my residence in Canada, and frequent intercourse with American citizens.

It may be admitted as an axiom, that when a nation is prospering, and its inhabitants in general are individually well to do, there is but little fear of their neglecting their own concerns to interfere with those of other people. But when the converse is the case, when distress or discontent prevails, and when the public mind is left, as it were, to prey upon itself,—then is an inclination engendered on the part of the restless and enterprising spirits of a community to excite, or, if already excited, to participate in commotions elsewhere, which shall serve to distract their attention from the contemplation of the disordered state of affairs in their native land, or enable them to enforce particular doctrines on which before they have only had leisure to theorize. The peculiarity of this state of things consists in the anomaly, that with nations, as with individuals, there is a disposition to imagine others wrong, for the purpose of setting them to rights, according to self-conceived notions, in lieu of first performing that friendly office for themselves.

It is by no means necessary to cross the Atlan-

tic for illustrations of this remark; but on the continent of North America the theory propounded has been more strikingly exemplified than in other quarters. But to the point. The disruption of social order (never effectually repaired), which took place in the United States, consequent on the great commercial and monetary crisis of the spring of 1837, threw into dangerous activity a mass of mind, theretofore absorbed in pursuits of gain, and, in like manner, threw into dangeruos inactivity a very large amount of bodily labour.

Both had, therefore, to seek fresh channels of employment; the vast prairies of the west took off a large portion of the better quality of each, but far too much of the refuse remained behind; and hence, when the insurrection broke out in Canada a few months afterwards, an accumulation of inflammable material was at hand to fan the flame of the conflagration kindled.

By depriving them of their accustomed employments, the first occurrence laid the foundation of a sort of erratic *vagabondage* on the part of those who were equally devoid of fixed prin-

ciples and fixed means of subsistence; while the second, by arousing their natural cupidity for the possessions of their foreign neighbours, at the same time with the latent desire of national aggrandizement animating the great mass of the community, held forth temptations which the general low tone of moral feeling in respect of national as well as social obligations was insufficient to overcome.

It is an error to suppose, that the liberation of Canada from British rule was a cherished object only with the northern and north-western border population of the Union. That population, from the circumstance of contiguity to the scene of action, and of actual participation in what took place, stood more prominently forward than the rest; but, with the exception of those classes of the community *immediately* interested in the preservation of peaceful relations with England, the sympathies and good wishes of the whole American people may, without exaggeration, be said to have been more or less strongly enlisted in the success of a cause

which they considered as promoting, by indirect means, an object of their national solicitude.

It is not by what was said or done in the Atlantic cities of the Union,—in this town or in that,—with the view to preserve appearances, that we must judge of the general state of feeling in this matter. The only means of appreciating it rightly, was and is to traverse the different States, more especially those bounding the British provinces, converse indiscriminately with the inhabitants, and compare the notes of observation so collected. They who have done this have been startled at the result of their inquiries,—at the extent of the deep-seated animosity rankling in the American breast against the British name and people,—and have been convinced that nothing but a salutary fear, (now daily waning,) of England's power, can counteract the *propensity* to aggression inseparable from such a morbid state of feeling

To the partially influencing cause which I have mentioned, must be superadded the dangerous contemplation of the successful issue of the nefarious attempt on Texas; the institution

of a false parallel,—since no analogy existed,—between the case of the Canadian insurgents and that of the old American revolutionists; a notion, founded on appearances, that the severment of the colonial connexion was secretly desired by the British ministry;* and, lastly, a recklessness of consequences, an inordinate self-vanity, and an indifference to means so that ends were answered — all peculiar features in the American character.

To believe that mere passing incident, rather than premeditated design, has worked out these results, would be almost a perversion of intellect. Time and opportunity serving, America commenced the game which she had to play; and though hitherto foiled in two successive bouts, is following it up with a degree of pertinacity commensurate with the importance of the object which she hopes to accomplish.

But, as resulting from this line of conduct, there is a further point to be adverted to. Themselves the aggressors, the American citizens are seeking to reverse the appearance of the fact, so

* *Vide* Appendix.

that a colouring of justification may be given to their after measures *in petto:* while, in anticipation of the claims which it is felt that England has a right to make upon them for the positive injuries which she has sustained by their repeated violations of her territory, they seemingly contemplate the balancing of all accounts by the application of a sponge to the sum total of the score, in order at once to escape from a present dilemma, or, in their own phraseology, "an awkward fix," and to hasten the *denouement* of the plot thus far unravelled.

Hence their constant harping on the perfectly justifiable, howsoever impolitic, transaction of the steam-boat *Caroline;* as also their demand for indemnity for the destruction of that vessel, and for the detention, under the circumstances already narrated, of the schooner *G. S. Weeks*, at the port of Brockville. Hence their *affecting to feel alarmed* at the amount of the armed force which, in consequence solely of their machinations, England is compelled, at a ruinous expense, to keep on foot within her North American provinces. Hence, in fine, their past and

present clamour respecting the disputed territory lying between the borders of New Brunswick and Maine!

If this territory, on the exclusive possession or on the equitable division of which, appears to hinge the momentous question of peace or war between England and the United States, involved, *de facto*, no other consideration than that of its abstract worth, it need perhaps require but a stretch of generosity on the part of the former to yield it to the latter as a boon-- even as an indulgent parent gives to a petted, pouting child, a worthless bauble wherewith to stay the clamour of its discontent: albeit a rod might prove the more fitting remedy.

But considering the question at issue by its own merits, it is obvious that the claims preferred by the Republic strike, as it is intended that they should do, at the vitality of British interests; since, by acceding to them, England must depend for access to Canada, during nearly one moiety of the year, upon the sufferance of the Republic; and thus a persistence by the latter in claims involving such undue sacrifices, would

leave England no alternative but the resistance of a fratricidal war, or the commission of an act having a suicidal tendency! Without caring to enter, under these circumstances, into a nice disquisition on intersectional lines, it is sufficient to advert to the matter of discussion on its broad principles; and to disclaim generally,—whilst advocating from a love of peace and justice, a fair adjustment of the difficulty,—against any concessions being made to clamour, that would bring to within a span of the waters of the St. Lawrence, the banner of the United States.

But let it not be supposed that by deferring even thus far, from false notions of expediency, to the views of the Republic, future peace and tranquillity would be insured: far from it. The elements of discord would be as great, if not greater than at present; and nothing beyond a brief respite would have been gained.

The boundary of the United States extending to the point designated, the free navigation of the St. Lawrence is speedily demanded. Would it be conceded? Possibly it might, on the same plea of expediency as before. But otherwise,

what is the consequence? War; an assault on the British provinces with the whole energies of the Union; and, considering the impoverished means of resistance they would then possess, their complete subjugation in detail.

Is it asked what object the American citizens have to gain by the expulsion of Great Britain from the North American continent? The reply is—"All, and every thing."

In the first place, they would become perfectly invulnerable by land. Secondly, they would be relieved of their anxiety respecting an indefensible line of inland frontier, fifteen hundred miles in extent, and would practically reduce such extended line to the mere breadth of the St. Lawrence just below Quebec, where a boom thrown across the river, would, in any emergency, insure them from assault. Thirdly, they would acquire a port on the Atlantic (now wanting to them), capable of fostering any number of vessels. Lastly, they would be able to devote their whole energies without the slightest fear of interruption from any foreign foe, to those great objects of their ambition, the unlimited increase of their navy,

and the rapid extension of their manufactures of all kinds; so as, in the one case, to be in a condition to dispute, at no distant period, the supremacy of England on her own element, and consequently, to threaten her security; and, in the other, to enter into a successful rivalry with her in every foreign market.

It is from this enlarged point of view that we should accustom ourselves to consider the ulterior consequences of the annexation of the British North American possessions to the great Republic. Even assuming that political disunion should, as is probable, at some time or another, cause the motto of that Republic to be reversed, in what would such circumstance militate against the conclusions here drawn, if unity of mind and purpose in regard to objects *not* of a domestic nature, be preserved inviolate?

For the reasons stated, we may rest assured that, notwithstanding so many rife causes of domestic discord within it, there will be no falling to pieces of the American Union—that flattering unction which so many lay prematurely to their souls—so long as there remain on

the North American continent a great European power; whose presence, while creating a feeling of bitterness difficult to describe, is perhaps the very hoop which binds together the staves of the ill-constructed cask that is seen incessantly whirling in the eddy of conflicting elements.

The Americans both feel and know that they cannot afford to plunge into anarchy of this kind under existing circumstances: what they might do were they free from the observance of their British neighbours is another question. But, even then, of this we may be certain, that in all matters tending in the least to affect them in their foreign relations, they will always be *animated as now, by the strongest possible feeling of nationality, in its most rigorous sense*, and capable of uniting their means and energies, in the promotion of any measure involving objects either of a common aggression or defence.

Considering, therefore, all these things; considering that the political aggrandizement of America can only be effected at the expense of England, in the western hemisphere; consider-

ing further, that the point at issue is purely a matter of degree; let us examine into the means at England's disposal for averting the evil wherewith she is imminently threatened.

Instead, then, of looking on her North American provinces, as mere colonies, and instead of seeking to retain them *as such* for an indefinite period, England should regard them as *parts of a future nation*, and, treating them accordingly, should qualify them to become such. The rule of generalization she has adopted with regard to all her colonies indiscriminately, without sufficient reference to the peculiar local circumstances of each, has constituted the great evil of her system of Colonial Government.

What is suited to detached islands is unsuited to continents, or sections thereof, nor could any thing prove more fatal, in the case of Canada, than continuing to act on a contrary belief.

In her past treatment of that country, England has practically borne out the remark of Bentham,* who says, in speaking of colonists,

* Rationale of Reward. B. 4, Chap. 14.

"little is cared for their affection, nothing is feared from their resentment, and their despair is contemned." Let it be hoped that her future policy will be of a different character.

Inasmuch as, for the reasons stated, it will be henceforth the endeavour of the American citizens (if present war be averted) to retard or stunt the growth of the Canadas, so long as they remain British Colonies, so should it be the endeavour of England to counteract those machinations, by working steadily towards the end of raising Canada to a condition admitting alike of self-government and self-defence; transferring, at a ripe maturity, a present weak dependence into a strong independent power, which, from the triple bond of feeling, interest, and similarity of institutions, should possess a natural leaning towards herself, and become an efficient local counterpoise to the ambition or hostility of the United States.

Before this consummation can be effected, much will of course require to be done; and while raising up Canada with one hand, England will require to ward off the United States with

the other—her power to do so being gradually strengthened in the progress of the work, by the adoption of judicious measures in the outset.

A marked repugnance to amalgamate with the United States has been manifested, in a way not to be mistaken, by the bulk of the British population of Canada, and all, consequently, that is now demanded, is to turn such feeling to a lasting profitable account.

To this end, in lieu of frittering away invaluable time in profitless legislation, for a weak, scanty population, it is of paramount necessity to increase forthwith the physical strength of the country, through the medium of immigration, whereby alone can present precarious tenure be converted into future security of possession, or any durable superstructure raised.

I have elsewhere adverted to the obstacles in the way of such an immigration as is needed; but they will not be found insuperable, if the remedies suited for them be timely applied.

To conclude. If England effectually sustains her North-American provinces *now*, they will prove a shield to her hereafter; whereas, if she

loses them prematurely,—that is, before they are sufficiently qualified to stand alone,—their future strength will be turned against her.

The great object of colonization of the ancients was this; and while taking care to do their duty towards the distant communities they had planted, so long as they needed their assistance and protection, they insured from them in return, both gratitude and attachment.

Among the many strongly-marked features of the Canadian drama enacted during the memorable period to which these reminiscences refer, was that of a belief, amounting indeed to a strong moral conviction, on the part of numerous intelligent individuals in the British provinces, in the agency of the Russian Government having been secretly employed to foment the troubles which took place; as also in the existence of a secret good understanding on Canadian matters, between that government and the government of the United States.

It would be but little flattering to the usual sagacity of Russian diplomacy to suppose that Russia aims at *supplanting* England in the *pos-*

session of her North-American provinces, because it is sufficiently apparent that America would tolerate the presence of no other European power in her vicinity were England thence expelled; but it would be still less flattering to Russian diplomacy to ascribe to it a want of perception that Russian, as opposed to British interests, might be materially promoted by successful rebellion in England's dependencies, or a want of inclination to act in consonance with such view, when and wheresoever a favourable opportunity of doing so might present itself, whether by accident or design.

Throughout the occurrences which, within the period mentioned, have disturbed the peace of Canada, and indeed down to the period of my quitting it, various suspicious circumstances transpired, calculated to leave but little moral doubt—positive proof being, of course, in such cases almost impossible—of Russia having indirectly lent herself to aid the schemes of those who were plotting and endeavouring to wrest the Canadian provinces from British sway.

In corroboration of such view, may be ad-

duced the following points of collective evidence, which rest on the recorded testimony of individuals whose means of acquiring accurate information were said to be undoubted, and who had no necessary connexion with each other.

I know not how far it may be generally known, neither am I aware if the real facts of the case have hitherto in any way transpired, but in the winter of 1838, a Russian diplomatic functionary from the United States visited Lower Canada, and when in Montreal, had, it seems, his travelling equipage seized and examined by the local authorities. It is true that nothing implicating him was discovered on an examination of his effects, but he was informed that the step had been taken on the strength of adequate testimony against him ; while, shortly after the event, it was said to have been declared by a competent authority, that conclusive proofs of the Russian's criminality resting on legal evidence and sworn depositions of facts, had been adduced in the first instance, and that, judging by all the circumstances, no moral doubt whatever could

be reasonably entertained of the efforts of Russian emissaries in America being directed to incite disaffection in the Canadas.

On a subsequent occasion, a Canadian political refugee, of some eminence, residing in the United States, is stated to have said, in alluding to the object of M. Papineau's visit to Paris, that it was not from the *French*, but from the *Russian* Government, that he expected succour in the execution of his plans for the deliverance of Canada from British rule: further remarking that there had always existed between the Russian Government and the "Patriots," a very deep sympathy; while he had good reason to believe, that upon the occasion of the first outbreak of the French Canadians, in 1837, a person connected with the Russian mission in Paris, caused an intimation to be made to some one in that capital, of the good wishes of the Russian Government for the success of the "patriot" cause, and of its desire to afford thereto if possible substantial assistance. As a conspicuous adherent of M. Papineau chanced to be in Paris about the time specified, the belief prevailed that

it was to him, or to some member of the American embassy there, that the foregoing alleged information was imparted.

Another Canadian, residing in New York, who, without himself being an actual partisan, was understood to be connected by parentage with some members of the "patriot" party, and was known to be on terms of the most confidential intimacy with many of its active emissaries, was also said to have made disclosures implicating certain Russian officials in the States, and tending materially to confirm the allegations hereinbefore mentioned. *He* is, moreover, reported to have stated, as the result of special inquiry, that there existed a strict alliance between the rebel Papineau and the Russian Government; that from the latter, liberal assistance was to be furnished for the support of the "patriot" cause; that Papineau was gone to Paris for the express purpose of negociating more conveniently with the Russian Government; and that arrangements even had been made to admit of his being conveyed from thence, in a quiet way, to St. Petersburg, to confer personally with the Emperor.

To the latter part of the story, in particular, the individual alluded to is said to have adhered with the greatest pertinacity; and, as shewing the general degree of weight attaching to his testimony, it was averred that he had forewarned the General Government of Canada of what was about to happen, long prior to each of the two successive insurrections which took place, and that subsequent events fully confirmed, even to minute details, all that he had predicted, both as to the means and ends, as well as to the deliberations and movements of the leading actors: mention being made, among other things, of an extensive supply of arms from New York that was in effect furnished.

According to this man's alleged further statement, it would seem to have been generally understood amongst those with whom he associated, that, in 1838, money was paid by a Russian agent for the purchase of arms for the "patriot" service; and that such money passed through the hands of a Frenchman in New York, whose *name assimilated precisely* with that of a second Frenchman, engaged in extensive mer-

cantile transactions in the same city, who was *known* to be a prominent member of a secret club there, termed "Société de Bienveillance," devoted to the interests of the "patriots;" was in strict intimacy with many of the leading rebels in Lower Canada, and also discovered to be in direct communication with M. Papineau, at Paris. It was furthermore represented, that through this channel, proof sheets of Papineau's inflammatory writings, published in the French capital, were constantly transmitted by the French packets, in order to be reprinted in the States, the copies being sent from thence to Lower Canada, for the purpose of circulation among the *habitans*.

Another Frenchman, zealous in the patriot interest, whose means of subsistence were a mystery, and who lived at the Café Français in New York, a notorious place of resort for obscure foreigners, and French Canadian political refugees, claimed, it is averred, as his particular friend, a Russian diplomatic functionary in the United States, whom he represented as being warmly enlisted in the "patriot" cause; adducing, in support of this allegation, the still more extraordi-

nary one, that both Hindelang and Von Schoultz had conferred personally with the functionary in question before they proceeded to the northern frontier, in the winter of 1838, to engage in the expedition against Canada, which, as regarded themselves, terminated, as may be remembered, in the forfeiture of their lives upon the scaffold.

According to all accounts, an intimate acquaintance and a constant associate of the same functionary, was an American of disreputable character, who was represented as having been living for many years by swindling practices; had been publicly accused, without, on his part, any attempt at refutation, of effecting the ruin of some respectable individuals by fraudulent transactions; was a close ally of the notorious William Lyon Mackenzie, an abettor of his proceedings, and also one of that worthy's bail on the occasion of his mock arrest by the American authorities, shortly after his return from Navy Island.

Nor was the alleged connection of the Russian official with this very reputable character confined to mere intercourse, if reliance may be

placed on the asseverations of third parties professing to have cognizance of the transaction, that bills of exchange to some amount drawn by the former on St. Petersburg, were given by him to the latter, for the purpose of being discounted. How the proceeds were applied did not certainly transpire, unless they may be associated with the purchase of arms effected through the Frenchman already mentioned.

Another grave circumstance of at least suspicion against the Russian, was the alleged fact of his sudden return to New York a few days previous to the 4th of July last, for the express purpose, as it was positively stated, of forwarding a series of renewed attacks on Canada, which, according to every concurrent testimony, were to take place on that anniversary of the declaration of American independence. That such measures of aggression were seriously projected, cannot with propriety be doubted; while it is probable that their execution was alone averted, either by the conspirators being overawed by the state of watchful preparation in which they found their adversaries, or by their own arrangements not

being sufficiently matured to admit of execution at the time appointed. As regards the Russian himself, it was said to have been ascertained by persons who professed to keep an eye upon his movements, that for some time after his arrival in New York, he was in the habit of retiring to his apartments, after dark, with various mysterious foreigners, including the Frenchman who boasted of his intimacy with him, and of there remaining in such company until the night was very far advanced, sometimes, indeed, trenching upon day-light.

Of the proceedings of this secret conclave, nothing appears to have transpired beyond the fact that writing implements were much in requisition among the party. As social intercourse with persons of the character and description of those in question would seem to be at variance with the station and habits of a person answering to the description given of the Russian, there can be but one conclusion left regarding the nature of the connection he had formed, and that needs no explanation.

He was further represented to have returned

from Buffalo (whither he had been for some unknown object), in company with a Russian colonel of engineers and the American worthy engaged in the bill-discounting transaction. This colonel was reputed to have been on active service in Circassia, and to have proceeded from thence direct to America by order of the Imperial government. Be this as it may, it was at least maintained that he had travelled along the whole Canadian frontier, as had also two other officers of the Russian engineer corps, one of whom reached New York, on his return from Lower Canada, with a companion, who proved to be no other than an active intelligent French Canadian rebel, who had just exchanged a state of mural incarceration for one of self-exile from his native land.

Lastly, towards the end of 1839, a Russian naval officer was represented to have made his appearance on the scene; his arrival being viewed with great complacency by those whose views it was his supposed object to promote.

On a point involving so much obscurity as

would naturally attach to the still more serious question of a secret good understanding between Russia and the United States, in a matter of this nature, but little beyond surmise can of course be hazarded. It is said to be the generally entertained opinion of many eminent American diplomatists and statesmen that the diplomatic intercourse of the two countries in question should be placed on a footing of the closest intimacy, because of the presumed congeniality of their respective interests, as opposed to those of England; while in consonance with such view, we find that, in effect, it has been the practice for some years past, in the public messages of the President to Congress, to advert, whensoever there was an opportunity, in more flattering terms to Russia than to any other nation.

One, in particular, of the distinguished individuals referred to, who is peculiarly qualified, from past avocatious and great political knowledge, to deduce correct conclusions from a political chain of argument, is stated to have expressed his belief, when speaking, in the course

of general conversation, on the subject of Canadian troubles, that it was highly probable the Russian government would seek, by indirect means, to promote disaffection and disturbances in Canada; not, however, that he was aware of any specific facts to warrant such opinion, but because he conceived it to be the line of policy which a power so "artful, active, and intriguing as Russia," would be likely to pursue.

Such is the collective testimony which, being more or less known in Canada, created a strong impression in the minds of many intelligent persons there, that Russian as well as American agency was at work in fomenting the aggravating occurrences which have marred the peace and happiness of that country for so long a period.

If it be, in reality, as sustainable as the general consonance of its different components, springing from sources wholly independent of each other, would seem naturally to imply, it presents a curious specimen of the diplomatic usages of modern days.

Should this probable picture of the past, portray alone the possible shadow of the future, my end in attempting the delineation will have been effectually attained; for, although, in a retrospective sense, but little advantage can accrue from a knowledge of what is stated, still, in a prospective one, in such a matter, "fore-warned, fore-armed," is a good old maxim deserving of regard.

With reference to the general substance of what precedes, on a dispassionate review of all the circumstances, and arguing by the somewhat analogous case of Russia's alleged intrigues in British India, a strong degree of plausibility, to say the least of it, must be considered as attaching to the actual prevalence of similar alleged intrigues in British America.

In former times (one cannot say the good old times), nations seeking to gratify their animosity or ambition at one another's expense, were wont to have at once recourse to the word-and-a-blow, or rather the blow-and-a-word system (the frequent inversion of the order of precedence, rendering

the exception in effect the rule); but the mode of procedure is now altered, and in lieu of immediate fisty-cuffs, the mutual weapons of attack and defence resorted to by hostile governments, are found to consist in fomenting discord and rebellion, each among the people subject to the other's dominion.

How far, after all, the *ultima ratio* between them may be by such means averted, is a question remaining to be solved, and at any rate irrelevant to the present matter.

The case of Canada being a peculiar one, elicits particular inquiry into *every* contingent means whereby the welfare of that country may be dangerously affected, in order, that being known, they may serve at least to dispel indulgence in a sense of false security, even if they cannot be effectually guarded against; and therefore it is that I have considered it expedient to place exclusively, in juxta-position in the same chapter, the two special subjects seeming to have affinity with each other, that have led to these concluding remarks.

I may have over-rated the prospective danger,

to the seeming advent of which I have wished to aid in awakening public attention, and I may also possibly be labouring, in respect of it, under entirely erroneous views; but I shall be well content to be convicted as a false prophet by the issue of events; nor, judging by present indications, can such issue be very far remote.

CHAPTER VI.

The Englishman's Political Reverie from the summit of Cape Diamond.—Original Errors committed by British Statesmen in regard to Canada.—Restitution of Canadian Civil Law.—Impolitic Division of the Province of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada.—Perversion of Elective System in the latter.—Character of Feudal Tenure.—Legislative Union of the Provinces.—Conclusions relative thereto.

It is a pleasant thing for an Englishman, who may be even moderately imbued with a sense of his country's past and present greatness, and with patriotic feelings, to take his stand, on a fine summer's evening, upon the summit of Cape Diamond, at Quebec, and there, communing with himself, to review in memory the leading incidents connected with the history of the vast continent whose gigantic arms encircle him on every side.

Towards which point soever of the horizon the vision of his thoughts may be directed, it is met

alike by monuments commemorative of British valour, enterprise, and skill.

Does he face the North, he views the records of his countrymen's scientific labours, implanted amidst the accumulated snow and ice of ages. Does he turn to the south, he beholds a nation mighty in its infancy,—the offspring of his own, and reared by its hands, whether for future good or evil,—developing its energies, displaying its resources, and revelling in its freedom, attained through the resistless vigour imparted by an innate consciousness of maturity. Does he revert towards the east or towards the west, he discerns the embryo of a second nation engendered of the same parent stock as the first, and requiring only fostering care, and timely prudent cultivation, to become, at no distant period, its contemporary as well as counterpoise, in wealth, strength, and prosperity.

Eastward, also, he recognizes the wide waste of waters, forming his country's particular domain, teeming with her commerce, and exhibiting indisputable evidences of the fertile genius of her sons, in improving the modern means of navigation.

At the base of the rock he paces, he sees stretched out before him the memorable plains, whereon the power, in the western hemisphere, of a formidable rival European nation was finally extinguished by his country's prowess.

He looks down upon that scene of former strife with melancholy interest, rejoicing at the resplendent victory there won, as much, because it terminated the cruel and disastrous wars which had theretofore been mutually waged by either party, as that it added another brilliant leaf to his country's laurel wreath.

Amid the busy sounds proceeding from below, he misses the harrowing war-cry of the fierce Algonquin,* or of the equally fierce Iroquois,† formerly arrayed in deadly strife against each other by the corrupting influence of European gold.

That cry, smiting with greater terror those who heard it, than even the uplifted tomahawk itself, is for ever hushed, it may be hoped,

* This tribe is almost extinct.

† Now known as the Six Nations' Indians: they are very diminished in number.

within the sphere where formerly it resounded, and is there succeeded by the notes of busy industry.

Pursuing the contrasts he is thus forming between the present and the past, the mental soliloquist goes back to the time when the surrounding vast inland waters, now ploughed by busy steam-boats, were navigated alone by the Indian canoe or the cumbersome *bateau*, and associates the widely-extended local commerce of the present day with the insignificant though profitable traffic carried on by the Canadian *voyageur*, or thinks of the comparatively recent days when naked savages brought down their peltries to barter in Montreal.

But after all, there is here, as in most other works of human undertaking, a dark side to the picture; and this is speedily exhibited to the meditative beholder.

In the midst of the pleasurable emotions excited in him by the contemplation of his country's abstract grandeur, as reflected in the remote region of her renown where now he finds himself, and by the evidences carrying conviction to his

mind, that while civilization has effectually supplanted there the desolation of savage life, British enlightenment has no less released from hereditary thraldom a race of foreign bondsmen (how ungratefully soever these may have received the boon), he is saddened by the thought that much of what was requisite at the hands of prudence to render durable the social structure, which valour founded and enterprize partially upraised, had been neglected; and though the legitimate means, still admitting of adoption for the tardy reparation of original error, readily suggest themselves to his imagination, an involuntary doubt shoots across his mind, as to whether even the immediate application of those means can render them efficacious to the full extent needed.

In the foreground of the reversed picture now before him, he at once detects the primary cause of the whole train of local evils, whose practical effects have been exhibited within the period of his own recollection. The living proof of a twofold error of commission and omission, are there

palpably depicted: the first consisting in the non-assimilation of a torpid race of men, theretofore the *exclusive occupants* of a land inadequately peopled, with the state of things peculiar to a new era in their existence; the second, in the total neglect of their mental culture, as a preparatory means of imbuing them with notions which should prove alike conducive *to their own future happiness*, and to the common safety of the community whereof they now formed *a part*.

Looking to a later period, he is made sensible that, notwithstanding unity of interests on the continent he surveys, had ceased, by the secession of one great body of its population from the common system, no pains were taken to preserve, prospectively, the still adhering fragments from the encroachments or aggressions of the more compact detached mass; or, in other words, that no adequate means were devised, calculated to impart to the first that degree of physical and moral strength which could alone enable them to keep a *relatively equal pace* with the progress of the

last; or to qualify themselves for an after state of independence similar to that which, in the one case, had already been achieved.

Attendant upon this, as also upon the intestine elements of danger first adverted to, the contingency of conflicting constitutional principles needlessly brought into collision, through the obstacles impeding steady progressive immigration, is also apparent on the darkened canvas, and serves more strongly to reflect its other gloomy objects.

It is time, however, to quit Cape Diamond. A cloud long hovering there, portending the discharge of wrath, which, unless prepared for, shall rive the rock to its foundation, warns the loiterer to depart; and, descending from his post, he hurries to the solitude of his chamber, in order to pursue on paper the train of thought awakened by his past reverie.

On an impartial retrospect of the past, it will be found that the first great political error committed in Canada by British statesmen, subsequently to that country becoming a dependence of the British crown, was the restitution of the

Canadian civil law, founded on the feudal anti-commercial "*Coutûme de Paris*," after the provincial population had been for some years living submissively under English laws, and accustomed to English rules of civil procedure.

This measure, effected by the Quebec Act, passed hastily in 1774, would seem to have been intended as a kind of political experiment, forming part of a series of harsh decrees, directed against the old revolted colonies, and if at all defensible, can alone be held so for the time it served (if indeed, it did so) the temporary purpose for which it was apparently designed.

Its after inutility to this special end should, obviously, have ensured its repeal at the earliest opportunity; the more especially as the whole body of British settlers in the province, already feeling it to be diametrically at variance with their interests, were strenuously opposed to its continued operation, and earnestly petitioned the British Parliament, on various occasions, to be relieved from the disabilities which it virtually imposed upon them. One of these petitions, bearing date the 24th of November 1784, is

said to be notable for the lucid exposition it contained. The urgent representations of the British inhabitants were, however, wholly disregarded; and in 1791, the British Parliament consummated its former folly and injustice by passing the Constitutional Act of 1791, whereby, as every one knows, the province of Quebec was divided into the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada; the obnoxious Canadian civil law being still left to work its mischief in the latter. Now, no two greater anomalies could, perhaps, have been brought into juxta-position than the law in question, and the representative form of government that was thus ostentatiously accorded to the French Canadians; who, imbued with the most inveterate prejudices, besottedly ignorant and blindly passive, were in no respect pre-qualified to wield, with advantage either to themselves or others, the instrument of power placed so inopportunely in their hands.

It was some time before the majority of them could be made to comprehend the *nature* of the gift; many, indeed, inquiring, in their simplicity, as I have been assured on the most cre-

dible testimony, if it were not a machine, and, if so, how it was to be set a-going?

The mischief perpetrated was very greatly augmented by an injudicious division of the Lower province into counties, without sufficient regard to territorial extent, or the formation of *new settlements:* for, the representation granted was regulated in accordance with the wants of a stationary, instead of a progressive, population, and confined to the seigneuries, or lands held under the feudal tenure.

Until within the last fourteen or fifteen years, when a slight modification of the original system was effected, the holders of freehold tenures, and consequently the English population of the modern townships, were precluded from returning a single member; while, after all, even by the tardy change in question, territorial extent, diversity of tenure, and commercial as well as general interests, remained virtually as much unrepresented for any practical results, as they had been absolutely so in the first instance.

The almost universal suffrage established by the Constitutional Act, combined with the ab-

sence of any restrictive qualification, either as to property or education, in the candidates for election to the Assembly, destroyed every expectation of seeing intelligent and liberal-minded representatives returned by constituencies almost entirely consisting of a class of persons resembling the peasantry of France a century ago. For some time, indeed, after this act of pseudo-designation came into operation, a few members friendly to commercial and British interests, were returned, mainly by the influence of wealth and commercial favours being brought to bear upon portions of a population for the most part poor, by a few sanguine enterprizing British capitalists. But, in proportion as it became apparent to French Canadian demagogues, that the constitution their countrymen had received admitted of perversion from its legitimate, to the promotion of their own exclusive objects, a corresponding handle was shaped, and fitted by them to the instrument; the pliant materials thereof being the slumbering prejudices and national antipathies of an anti-

British people, whose minds, at first gradually awakened by insidious arts to the contemplation of an eventual ascendancy of numbers, were afterwards kept steadily directed to that point by appeals of an inflammatory nature, varying in force just as proximate or contingent causes of popular excitement chanced to preponderate. Hence, though the numbers and the wealth of the British population had an innate tendency to increase, in a greater proportional ratio than those of their French Canadian brethren, the power and pretensions of the latter gradually augmented beyond all safe or justifiable limits.

But the very tendency in question on the one part, also stimulated on the other the desire to check it; and as ample means of doing so had unfortunately been furnished, there needed but a determination to employ them.

Notwithstanding the most vigorous efforts, renewed at intervals, to acquire an equal footing, the British commercial minority gradually dwindled into insignificancy; so much so, that one session of the provincial legislature exhibited

the extraordinary spectacle of the local executive being unable to carry a single measure necessary for its beneficial working or existence.

But endless embarrassment to the executive, was not the only evil resulting from the original error in the composition of the government.

The House of Assembly, having practically become the organ of the most ignorant and prejudiced part of the foreign population, incurred as a body the positive contempt and hatred of the entire British population, who naturally recoiled from submitting to the yoke of a French antiquated oligarchy, and felt an insuperable repugnance to appeal, in almost any case, to a body so incompetent and prejudging.

The French dominant faction resolved itself, in effect, by its neutralizing power, into the sole government of the country. *Nationality* was the test whereby alone the merit of every suggested measure of improvement, whether of a special or general nature, was measured, and hence the utmost opposition or the utmost favouritism in reference to such measure prevailed.

As showing how little the dominant anti-British

party was animated by a desire to co-operate in any modification of the old Canadian laws, so as to alleviate the burdens it imposed on commercial interests, it need only be mentioned, that, on one occasion, a bold attempt was made by the House of Assembly to extend the application of the feudal tenure (hereafter to be analyzed) to a considerable portion of the ungranted lands of the crown, establishing there as elsewhere, according to the Quebec Act of 1774, already adverted to, the Canadian civil laws, with all their train of humiliating consequences.

During a long series of years, commercial men were engaged in unavailing efforts to obtain from this anti-commercial branch of the legislature, measures essentially requisite for improving the domestic economy of the province, so as to render it an eligible field for British commercial enterprise.

In short, all propositions for laws tending to effect assimilation, to encourage immigration, to facilitate and render secure transfers of property, to bestow a just participation in common rights of every kind, were almost uniformly re-

jected; not, indeed, from a want of perception of the general advantage of such measures, but because their adoption would augment English settlements, and thereby lessen the local influence of those who had been allowed to monopolize all representative power.

It is truly painful to reflect how a small population which, at the period of the conquest, would have passively received from the conqueror's hand the shape most conducive to subserve British interests, was permitted, through a false system of indulgence and a meagre policy, to grow into hideous deformity, and to become so self-willed and untractable, through distorted views, arising from the want of proper education, as to consider in the light of positively oppressive measures, those progressive changes of social improvement which the people of other countries regard and are wont to solicit as boons of the highest value.

Foremost among the burdens peculiar to the feudal system, that have been and continue to be experienced as the most oppressive, not only to commerce, but also to every sort of industry

and improvement, is the seigneurial claim of *lods et ventes*, or mutation fines; being an imposition of eight per centum, or nearly one-twelfth part, upon the purchase-money or ex-negotiable value of all lands and houses, rigidly enforced upon every transfer, howsoever frequent, except that of inheritance or testamentary bequest. Until the seigneuries themselves shall be held in free and common soccage, in lieu, as now, of mortmain, this evil system must be expected to exist. Next in degree is the *droit des rétraits*, or right of pre-emption, enjoyed by the seigneur over all such property as his tenant, or *censitaire*, may dispose of, with the above exceptions.

The Canadian law allows to the seigneur forty days after the presentation of the deed of transfer, to decide as to accepting the mutation fine, and granting possession of the property to the proposed transferree, or resuming it at the price stipulated between the contracting parties!

Another invidious right of the Canadian seigneur minor only in the comparison, is that of *monopolizing* all the mill seats within the limits of

his seigneurie, and of obliging all his tenants to have their corn ground at his mills, which, in addition to being often out of repair, are frequently inconveniently situated; and he exacts for the service, a toll or moulture of one-fourteenth part; an allowance that, *in a state of free competition*, would encourage the establishment of excellent mills, in central situations, with good roads made at the miller's expense. It is notorious that this seigneurial right has been exercised in the province, to the serious detriment of the export trade in flour, which requires an improved manufacture.

The feudal right of *lods et ventes*, weighing heavily as it does upon general industry throughout the province, is a formidable bar, not only to local improvement, but to that ready *circulation* of property which the interest of commerce imperatively requires; and, in the present state of Canadian law, the seigneur, even if willing, cannot, by any act of his, render binding on his heirs and successors the commutation of any feudal privilege, for what consideration soever. Lands held under the seigneurial tenure, *as well*

as buildings erected on them, are rendered, by the operation of this law, so onerous and precarious, that a merchant, when obliged, as is frequently the case, to purchase them from persons indebted to him, is quickly driven to sell them again at a great sacrifice; and consequently two payments of mutation fine *on the same property* may take place within a few weeks or months. Sometimes, indeed, these mutation fines are purposely left to accumulate; and as they constitute a privileged mortgage above all other mortgages, they may sweep away the whole sum realized at the latest sale of the property.

In addition to the exclusive privileges already mentioned as preying on the very vitals of the province, allusion must be made to the burthens incident to mortgage, which, in the present state of Canadian law, no human foresight can enable a contracting party always to evade. In Lower Canada, fixed property, or real estate, can be secretly mortgaged for its full estimated value, without a surrender of the title deeds, to different individuals, as often as the necessities or the temerity of the proprietor may prompt him to

such courses; which, however fraudulent they be, the laws now in force do not recognize as criminal. These mortgages affect not only present, but also *prospective* property. The owner has only to go from one to another *paire fidèle* of French-Canadian notaries,* (who claim exemption from answering inquisitorial questions as to the state of the case, on the plea of their official oath,) in order to mortgage his estate *ad infinitum;* such mortgages, when brought to light, being entitled to precedence as securities over all other claims, according to seniority of date, and preserving a hold upon the property for the space of thirty years.

The non-existence of an office of registration or, in its absence, of any law or statute compelling the notarial corps to deposit, for public information, with the provincial authorities, copies of their acts or instruments burthening fixed property or real estate, induces, in all transactions for the transfer of such possessions, a

* According to the Quebec Almanac, the number of notaries in the province, in 1837, was 380; of whom 340, or about nine-tenths, bore a French designation.

feeling of suspicion and distrust, from which, in order to relieve the mind of a purchaser, the most honourable proprietor can alone exempt himself by the no less humiliating than expensive means of a friendly suit, terminating in the sale of the property by the district sheriff, and this is after all a very precarious security.

Apart from their obstinate adherence to the antiquated laws tolerating these abuses, a review of the journals of the provincial assembly will furnish ample proof of the anti-commercial, unimproving spirit displayed from first to last by the French Canadian members of that body.

The inadequate progress made by agriculture, the imperfect cultivation of the soil, and the tardy improvement of the channels of internal communication, all resulting from the inauspicious train of circumstances hereinbefore described, have hitherto prevented the merchants of Lower Canada from furnishing to the British West-India islands, that abundant supply of provisions which, with the aid of the supply derived from Upper Canada and Nova Scotia, would have rendered them less dependent on the

United States' markets, at the same time that it would have enriched British subjects in lieu of American citizens.

As confirmatory of many of the views I have expressed in this, and in a previous chapter, respecting the state of Lower Canada, I subjoin a few extracts, from a series of articles from the pen of an able writer on the affairs of that country, which were published in one of the Montreal newspapers five or six years ago. Their general substance will also be found to correspond with many of the opinions recorded by the Earl of Durham, in his report.

"That the population," says the writer, "is generally uneducated, is obvious from the notorious facts, that trustees of schools are specially permitted by statute to affix their crosses* to their scholastic reports, and that within the last two years, in each of two grand juries of the Court of King's Bench for the district of Montreal, selected, under a provincial law, from among the wealthiest inhabitants of the rural parishes, there

* As a substitute for signatures.

was found only one person competent to write his name.

"For fifty years after the cession of the province, the two races, if they did not harmonize in social intercourse, were in some degree blended on political occasions, and but for the haughty domination of an official faction which indiscriminately oppressed Britons and Canadians, and but for the selfish ambition of a few agitators, who after humbling the common enemy, transferred their hatred from the British executive to the British name, they might ere now have forgotten or neglected national distinctions.

"About twenty-five years ago," he continues, "commenced a struggle between a knot of hereditary placemen and independent individuals, of either origin—a struggle not for power, but for liberty; a struggle which ended, as the battles of freedom generally do end, in the exposure of official corruption, and in the prostration of usurped power.

"Flushed with success, and unfettered by honesty or policy, the Canadian agitators cruelly

deceived their uneducated constituents into a belief, that the British inhabitants of the province and Britons generally, were the bitter, persevering enemies of Canadians; and thus divided the provincial population into two distinct and irreconcilable masses, the French majority and the British minority.

"To perpetuate this numerical supremacy, the patriots have systematically attempted to deter Britons from settling in Lower Canada.

"They have taxed British immigrants, and British immigrants only, in defiance of constitutional principles, in defiance of national gratitude, in defiance of common sense. They have met with silent contempt the Governor's repeated and urgent request, that they would establish an efficient quarantine for the benefit at once of the immigrant and of the province.

"They have strained every nerve to ruin the banks of the colony, and thus to strike with fatal aim the very vitals of commerce. They cherish with obstinate tenacity the most petty vexations of the feudal tenure, not because such vexations are profitable to any one, but because they pos-

sess the recommendation of being hateful to Britons."

The writer illustrates such vexations by adducing the seigneurial right of fishery and chace, and of calling for the title-deeds of every vassal.

He then goes on to say: "The patriots may, on more intelligible grounds, defend the mutation fine (*lods et ventes*), and the seigneur's exclusive privilege of grinding the grain of the seigneurie. It is not to be supposed that the seigneurs will voluntarily relinquish lucrative claims without being adequately remunerated by law; but in the course of forty-two years of industrious legislation, one might reasonably have expected some attempt to remove or ameliorate so absurd, so galling, so impolitic burdens. The evils that spring directly from the mutation fine are three-fold. It prevents the free transfer of property; it gives the seigneur an interest in driving an embarrassed vassal to a sale; and being levied on all improvements, it is virtually a tax on industry, and seriously diminishes the demand for manual labour and mechanical skill."

"In fine," he adds, "it checks the growth of cities, thus crippling at once commerce and agriculture; it carries the immigrant, whether labourer or mechanic, to a more open market, and by damping the enterprise of capitalists, depresses, below the just level, the value of real property. From feudal prejudices, our antagonists also oppose the registration of real property, and thus strive to perpetuate a host of practical grievances of an intolerable character,—secret and general mortgages; forced sales, from the difficulty of borrowing money; interminable litigation; and the expense, if not the impossibility, of procuring an unexceptionable title. This last remark tends to explain the more intelligible grounds of attachment to the feudal law. The seigneur's motives are obvious and natural; and the legal circumstances alluded to, sufficiently account for the feudal predilections of lawyers and notaries of French extraction, who, as they form a majority of the educated laymen, have unbounded influence, as well in the country as in the Assembly.

"Supposing," he argues, "a manufactory or

building worth £12,000 to be erected upon a lot not worth £100, if the proprietor has occasion to sell, and could even find a purchaser willing to give in all the sum paid by the proprietor for the erection of the edifice, the proprietor is nevertheless liable to lose £1,000 as a *punishment* for having had the industry, the means, and the enterprize to build, because the claim of the seigneur is not merely the twelfth of the original value of the ground, but the twelfth of the amount of the money and labour of others laid out upon the building also.

"This, under the feudal system, becomes a privileged debt to the seigneurs, who have not expended a farthing. But this is not all. The next, and the next vendor, *ad infinitum*, must each in turn lose to the seigneurs a twelfth of the purchase-money; so that if, by inevitable misfortunes, the buildings should change hands a certain number of times, the seigneurs will benefit by these evils to the amount of the £12,000, or full cost of the edifice, being one hundred and twenty times the value of the lot.

"But the seigneur's privilege does not even

end here; for when he has obtained for once the £12,000 of the money of others, as in the case supposed, his claims proceed again in the same manner as before."

The following remarks, by the same writer, on the subject of insecurity of title, and also on the system of general mortgages, as aggravating the evils of secret obligations, will more fully illustrate those evils than my own imperfect attempts to do so.

He observes: "If a man take to himself a wife, with or without a special contract, he grants a mortgage to the amount of the lady's dower, over all the real property which he either does then, or may thereafter possess." "But this," he continues, "is a comparatively feeble illustration, for a man can hardly take to himself a wife without a tolerably general notoriety of the fact. The descendants of a deceased wife inherit all her claims, and may possibly exist abroad, in the third or fourth generation, without the knowledge or suspicion of a single inhabitant of the province. Such claim of dower is neither dissipated nor weakened by time; it is,

in truth, practically strengthened by the lapse of years, for every year necessarily weakens the evidence by which the claim might be defeated.

"Mortgages are created in various other ways than by marriage. When a rustic proprietor owes money to his grocer, or his baker, or his butcher, or haberdasher, he is generally compelled to pay him by a notarial obligation on all his real property, actual or contingent; and he sometimes grants a similar mortgage in favour of some pettifogging French lawyer, in consideration of the contingent costs of a newly begun law-suit. Every judgment of court also operates as a mortgage. But the most cruelly oppressive of all mortgages is the seigneur's *lods et ventes*, not considered merely as a fine, but with regard to the accumulations of such fine, advisedly permitted by the seigneur.

"Not one mortgage in a hundred takes its rise from the lending of money; so that the obstacles which the insecurity of titles throws in the way of borrowing, hardly tend, in any degree, to diminish the number of mortgages."

Again: "Where mortgages spring from such

a variety of circumstances, their *secrecy*, even if they were *special*, would be sufficiently pernicious; but their *generality* engenders evils absolutely intolerable and almost incredible. Through such *generality* of mortgages, a man cannot hold real property for an hour, without vitiating its title to the amount of all his previously granted notarial obligations. In this way, a man may pollute* the title even of real property that virtually never belonged to him. He may have bought a farm or a house on credit, may have been obliged from want of funds to restore it to the seller, and may thus have burdened it with a hundred previously contracted debts of indefinite amount."

In lieu of adopting the natural and only effectual measure of relief,—namely, the introduction of public registers,—the Assembly made a show of remedying these grievances, by passing a practically unbeneficial act for the ratification of titles.

Of it, the writer already quoted, thus speaks: "That act," he says, "is ruinously expen-

* *i. e.* by mere temporary possession.

sive, retrospectively imperfect, and prospectively worthless.

"It is ruinously expensive, for the cost even of the unsatisfactory ratification is about ten pounds currency, being thirty or forty times as much as the ordinary cost of registration, and equal in amount on small properties to a second mutation fine for the benefit of the lawyers and the officers of Court.

"It is retrospectively imperfect, since it does not relieve the property from a living wife's or a minor's claim for dower.

"It is prospectively worthless, for the property as soon as it passes into the hands of the purchaser, under a comparatively pure title, is potentially polluted by that purchaser's previous notarial obligations.

"So slovenly and worthless an Act places the self-styled reformers morally in a worse position than that in which they previously stood. It confesses the evil; but so far from removing that evil, it only tempts purchasers to squander fees in the Court of King's Bench—fees, which, like the mutation-fine itself, must be renewed on every successive sale."

Some further idea of the sentiments animating the French Canadian leaders, and of their endeavours to inflame the passions of the masses whose interests they professed to advocate, may be gathered from the following passages, selected from a French pamphlet, published in Montreal, under their auspices, a few years since, its circulation being specially designed for the rural population.

" A host of Britons hastened to the shores of the new British colony to avail themselves of its advantages, in order to improve their own condition.

" Owing to the facilities afforded by the administration, for the establishment of Britons within *our* colony, the latter came in shoals to *our* shores to push their fortunes at *our* expense.

" Many of them established themselves in *our* cities, where they were encouraged by their fellow-countrymen, and have succeeded in making themselves masters of all the trade both foreign and domestic.

" They have introduced a system of paper money, based solely upon their own credit, and

have persuaded our *habitans* to commit the folly of receiving it as ready money, although it is not hard cash, current among all nations, but, on the contrary, is of no value, and would not pass current beyond the limits of the province."

The whole of these extracts are sufficiently indicative of intense national animosity, but the last, in particular, exhibits a strange admixture of ignorance, cunning, and anti-commercial views.

Such, generally, was the calamitous state of things which led, owing to the natural resistance it provoked, to the passing of the celebrated ninety-two resolutions of the French Canadian House of Assembly, and brought about the subsequent suspension of the constitution, in part originating all the mischief, as also two successive insurrections—to be succeeded, peradventure, should further folly afford the opportunity, by a third!

Labouring under the manifold grievances that have here been exhibited, the British population of Lower Canada regarded with intense anxiety the prospect of partial emancipation from them, held out to their hopes rather

than to their expectation, in 1822, by the introduction of a Bill into the British Parliament for effecting a Legislative Union of the Canadian Provinces; and were then almost as unanimous in their wish to see that object accomplished, as they have shewn themselves to be on a late occasion.

But party influence, distorted or interested views, and short-sighted policy, conspired to defraud them of the coveted measure of relief; while, a few years afterwards, they were plunged into despair by the report (published in 1828) of the Canada Committee of the House of Commons, the suggestions contained in which for effecting a few nominal improvements of a superficial nature, were heavily counterbalanced by the spirit of marked partiality evinced by the Committee towards the French Canadians, as manifested by their expressed desire to see preserved, and even extended, the means of perpetuating the distinctive French nationality which had so long been under the fostering care of the British Government.

In the Appendix will be found some interest-

ing documents illustrative of the views and position of the British inhabitants of Lower Canada at a period ulterior to that just mentioned, and also further explanatory of much that has been stated in relation to the peculiarity of their previous condition.

The efficacy of the legislative union of the Canadas, as an ingredient for restoring the supremacy of British principles and institutions, on that section of the North American Continent, must obviously depend entirely upon the *contingency of it being, or not being associated* with other measures of a fundamental nature.

On the first hypothesis, permanent benefits may be anticipated from its operation; but on the last, it *can* be productive of but little advantage beyond the present relief of the Upper Province from its pecuniary burdens, and *may*, nay, must, prove a delusion.

The auxiliaries whose simultaneous agencies it requires are, primarily, immigration; secondly, preponderance of representation for the Upper, so long as the French Canadian population of the Lower Province remain, as now, numerically

superior to the British inhabitants of the cities and townships; thirdly, the abolition of the anti-commercial old French law of 1774, already adverted to, and the substitution in its place of English civil law; and lastly, the introduction of a system of popular education, whereby the use of the English language should become disseminated among the ignorant, misled *habitans* of the rural districts.

It is assumed, of course, that the English language should alone be tolerated as that of the legislature, the executive, and the courts; its gradual adoption in the last, in particular, being imperatively enforced.

Surrounded by the safeguards indicated, the measure of the Union, by at once identifying the British population of Lower Canada with the well-affected portion of the inhabitants of the Upper Province, would seem eminently calculated to insure to both greater protection against revolutionary influences than they have possessed since 1791; nor would the unholy alliances, predicted by some as likely to ensue for subversive purposes, between the ultra-radical members of

French or British origin, who might find seats in the United Assembly, be likely to prove under such circumstances very baneful in their effects.

As regards the establishment of municipal institutions in Canada, they must be viewed as necessary adjuncts to the well-working of the representative system, if that itself be established on a safe and proper basis. Being part and parcel of a popular form of government, they could not with propriety be withheld longer than the time when their introduction might seem beneficial; and such period would appear to have now arrived.

The people of Toronto, and, in general, the whole of the adherents of the petty oligarchy notoriously existing in Upper Canada, have always been as much opposed to the Legislative Union, whensoever the subject has been mooted, as the French Canadians themselves; and this apparently for no better reason than that a few local and private interests would be sacrificed to the public good.

I have often, with surprise, remarked, when conversing on the subject with Upper Canadians

of the better class, how little, generally speaking, they appeared to be impressed with the conviction, so strongly felt by strangers, that the *interests* of the two provinces are, in all respects identical; and, also, how little they seemed to imagine that the affairs of Lower Canada, whether for good or for evil, were closely blended with their own.

They felt sensibly the inconvenience of being pent up, as in a prison-house, by the United States on one side, and Lower Canada on the other, without any egress to the ocean, but through one or other of those countries; but then they proposed, as the means of surmounting the difficulty, not to make common cause, as bodies, with their British brethren in the Lower Province, against two common enemies, but to appropriate *to themselves* the district and island of Montreal, thereby leaving the British inhabitants dwelling in other sections of the province more exposed than ever, because of their circumscription in such case within a narrower circle, to the evils from which they had so long been struggling to get free.

For these reasons, and considering the sentiments known to prevail upon the subject among various influential persons, as inferred from the debates of the previous session, it was seriously apprehended by the advocates of the Union, at the period when I left Toronto, that how much soever opposed to the sense of the community at large might be such conduct, a majority in the Legislature would have, nevertheless, been found of sufficiently biassed views and restricted notions, to reject the bill about to be propounded to them, for operating the Union, and that consequently no alternative would have remained to the Governor-general but that of a dissolution of the Assembly, and an appeal to the constituencies.

The explanation of the apparently ready assent which was given to the measure by both branches of the legislature, in the face of former expressed grounds of objection, not removed, is probably to be found in the fact, that while many members of the Assembly shrank from the contingency of a dissolution, all were alike sensible that through the medium of the Union alone could the impending bankruptcy of the Upper

Province, resulting from causes hereafter to be mentioned, be averted.

It is, however, scarcely worth while to inquire by what process many inconsistent members of the Provincial Assembly became all at once consistent in this matter, seeing that, happily, the *principle* contended for has been conceded; but it is much to be regretted that the legislature of Upper Canada should not have exacted better terms as the condition of their acquiescence, by stipulating, that whatever might be the number of representatives assigned to Lower Canada, that number should be exceeded by at least one-third in favour of the Upper Province, until such time as there should be a sufficient influx of British immigrants to render positively safe, equality of representation for the two provinces.

Failing, as it must if an isolated measure, to produce the early political advantages anticipated from it, the legislature would be ill able to withstand the after pressure of events upon it; and we may be assured, in such case, that further

opportunity of remodelling the fragments would be sought in vain.

I have endeavoured to show, in a preceding chapter, that a *present* severment of the actual political relations of England and Canada, so far from conducing, as some suppose, to the future welfare of each, would, on the contrary, prove disastrous to both, by striking at the vitality of the one, and crushing, while in embryo, the *reserved independence* of the other.

But the strict logical sequence of this view, from the train of reasoning adduced, points no less forcibly to the mutual advantages that might be confidently expected to accrue when Canada should have acquired the strength and means to stand alone, from the exchange of the colonial connexion for the bond of a *national alliance*, cemented, as in such case it would be, by the ties of a common interest, a common sympathy, and, above all, by a common safety.

Entertaining very strongly this twofold conviction, which extensively obtains in Canada, I should be indeed happy could I know that

I had succeeded in imparting it to any number of those who may chance to peruse these pages, and should consider myself as well repaid by such result for the task of their compilation.

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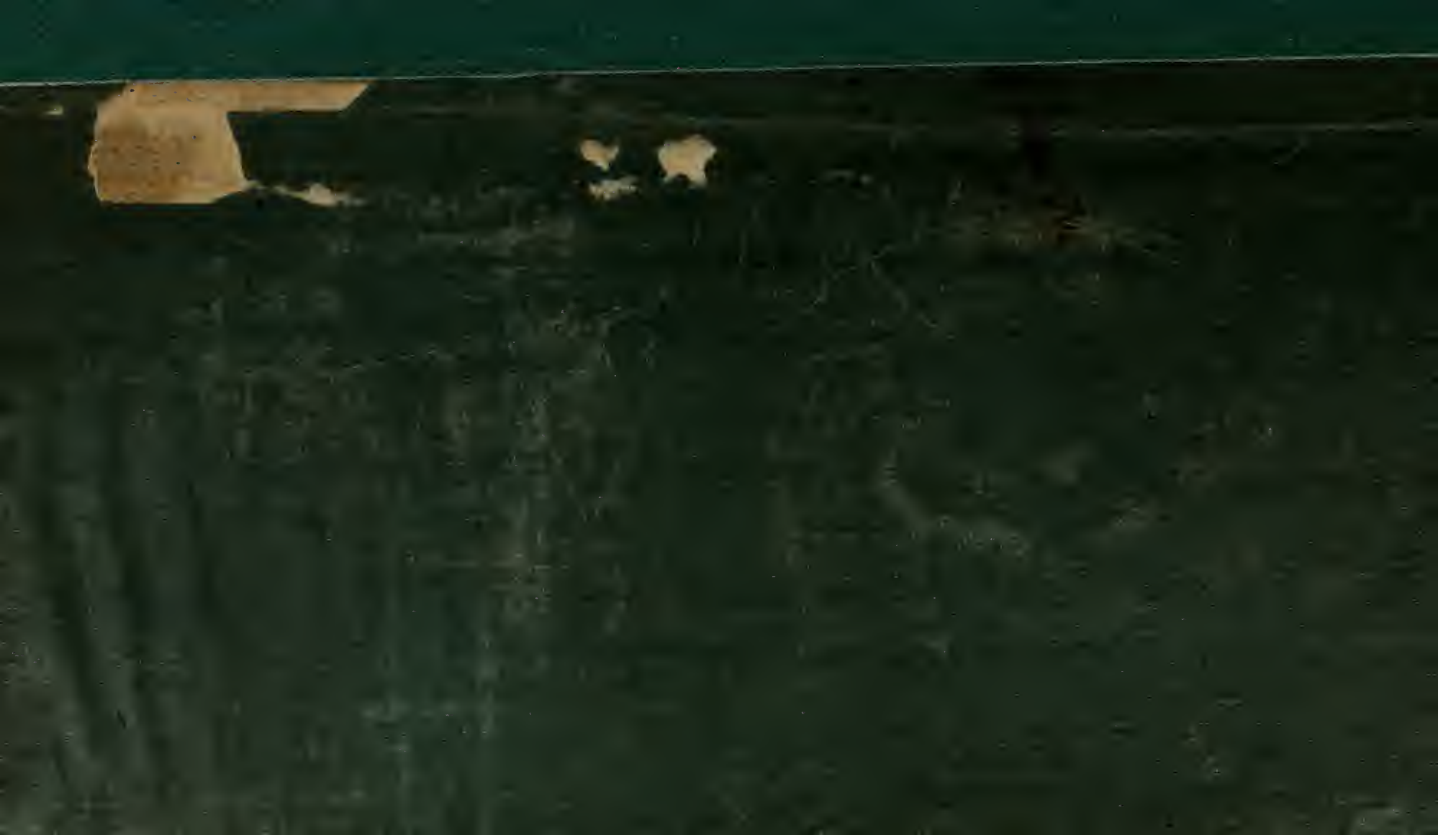
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